

VOLUME XLIX · NUMBER 2

April 1958

THE
ROMANIC
REVIEW

FOUNDED BY PROFESSOR HENRY ALFRED TODD

A QUARTERLY ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS • PUBLISHER



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THE ROMANIC REVIEW is published four times a year (February-April-October-December) by Columbia University Press, Mt. Royal and Guilford Aves., Baltimore 2, Md. Single copies \$1.25 (foreign \$1.35); \$5.00 a year (foreign, including Canada, \$5.30). Effective with the issue of October, 1958, the subscription rate will be: \$6.00 a year (foreign, including Canada, \$6.30); single copies \$1.50 (foreign, \$1.60). Subscribers should notify the publisher of change of address at least three weeks before publication of issue with which change is to take effect. Entered as second-class matter, at the post office at Baltimore, Md., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1958 by Columbia University Press.

Manuscripts, editorial communications, and books for review should be addressed to Professor Justin O'Brien, Philosophy Hall, Columbia University, New York City. THE REVIEW will not be responsible for the return of manuscripts unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. For all questions regarding preparation of manuscripts and printing style, consult the *MLA Style-Sheet* which originally appeared in *PMLA*, LXVI (1951), 3-31, and is available in reprints.

All communications of a business nature should be addressed to Columbia University Press, Mt. Royal and Guilford Aves., Baltimore 2, Md., or 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.

TEMA E ICONOGRAFIA DEL PURGATORIO

Di Enrico De' Negri

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Con il presente saggio noi tentiamo di adeguarci al modo in cui Dante ha composto le sue visioni nel *Purgatorio*, e specialmente nei sette balzi del purgatorio propriamente detto (IX-XXVII). La *Commedia* intera rispecchia una lunga visione la quale, per esser tagliata in tanti e tanto elaborati quadri, richiede un complesso gioco d'intelligenza e di fantasia, in primo luogo di fantasia visiva. Il lettore deve cercare di mettere la mente e gli occhi in quello stato di grazia illuminante, al quale il Poeta rivolge un appello intenso:

O mente che scrivesti ciò ch'io vidi,
qui si porrà la tua nobilitate.

Le forme strutturali della *Commedia* variano di cantica in cantica. L'*Inferno* consiste di una serie di pannelli delimitati e chiusi, i quali di regola coincidono con un singolo canto. I canti si susseguono secondo un ordine prestabilito. Tuttavia l'ordine non implica una continuità figurativa. Come non si può dire se il maestro medievale di una certa porta di bronzo abbia lavorato ai pannelli di essa nella medesima successione in cui li ha montati, così non è necessario assumere che Dante abbia steso tutti i canti dell'*Inferno* l'uno di seguito all'altro. Ogni canto presenta l'abbozzo di un paesaggio infernale, secondo le necessità del simbolismo, una schiera di peccatori, e in primo piano le principali figure esemplaristiche. Il loro atteggiamento è il modello plastico del discorso ch'esse stanno per pronunziare.

La *Commedia* non obbedisce al canone stilistico della fluidità, per cui una forma scivola inavvertitamente nell'altra, ma a quello della spezzatura. Nell'*Inferno* un canto, compiuto in se stesso, non lascia presagire quel che sarà il canto seguente. Il lettore avanza di sorpresa in sorpresa, di meraviglia in meraviglia. La natura stessa del meraviglioso, escludendo una catena di eventi collegati tra loro da un nesso razionale o semplicemente ragionevole, porta con sè un raccontare per forme chiuse, ciascuna delle quali è una "cosa nova".

Anche la costruzione del *Purgatorio* risulta di inquadrature ben definite, ciascuna chiusa in se stessa, nettamente terminate l'una rispetto all'altra. Ma a leggere e commentare il *Purgatorio* canto per canto se ne perde semplicemente il senso. Le dimensioni di ogni inquadratura eccedono largamente la misura di un singolo canto.

Se fosse lecito suggerire un mezzo empirico per vedere come il *Purgatorio* è costruito, bisognerebbe mandare a memoria i canti dedicati a ogni inquadratura e visualizzare in uno spazio adeguato gli elementi che la compongono. Questo artificio di riguardare come insieme presenti tutti i particolari che a una prima lettura appaiono come successivi, sembra contrastare col fatto che Dante inserisce la propria persona nella *Commedia*, avanzando con l'avanzare del tempo, a guisa di un pellegrino che giunge alla meta per esperienze successive. Tuttavia il pellegrino dell'oltretomba riserva a se stesso una parte eminentemente recettiva. In lui, come sopra una *tabula rasa*, si inscrivono le visioni. Esse sono il fattore attivo, fonte di bellezza e di sapienza. Dante guarda, indugia e passa; le visioni, a lui preesistenti, restano. L'inferno e il paradiiso stanno per loro natura fuori del tempo, e il tempo del purgatorio è un secolo imprecisabile, che sfugge alla percezione umana. Le esperienze soggettive di Dante, che si susseguono nel giro di pochi giorni, non deformano la rappresentazione oggettiva di cose non temporali. Il Poeta credeva in esse e le ha dispiegate per noi in uno spazio assoluto.

Nelle sette inquadrature del purgatorio riappaiono certi elementi costanti. Essi sono disposti secondo una voluta simmetria per la quale, illuminandosi a vicenda, formano un unico contesto.

1) Ogni inquadratura è delimitata a sinistra e a destra da due angeli, quasi celesti decorazioni. In ogni successivo balzo gli angeli si fanno sempre più luminosi e leggeri, più lontani dalla materia terrestre. Così dall'angelo della penitenza, vestito di grigio e assiso sopra un simbolico trono sacramentale (IX, 72 sgg.), si trascorre all'angelo della misericordia che è tutto splendore (XV, 7 sgg.) e all'angelo della temperanza che è un alato soffio di primavera:

E quale, annunziatrice de li albori,
l'aura di maggio movesi ed olezza
tutta impregnata da l'erba e da' fiori;
tal mi senti' un vento dar per mezza
la fronte, e ben senti' mover la piuma,
che fe' sentir d'ambrosia l'orezza.

(XXIV, 145-50)

Al passare di un'anima ogni angelo intona un canto liturgico, appropriato all'uffizio che si svolge in quella circostanza.

2) Non lontane da gli angeli, nella parte interna dell'inquadratura appaiono due serie parallele di esempi. Da una parte esempi della perfetta virtù che è contraria al vizio che quivi si purga, dall'altra esempi di fatti peccaminosi con la punizione implacabile che ne è conseguita. Come gli angeli, così anche gli esempi vanno soggetti alla stessa trasfigurazione. Gli esempi di umiltà e i paralleli esempi dei misfatti che la superbia partorisce, stanno scolpiti su un pavimento, verso il quale i penitenti chinano la testa

gravata da un provvidenziale macigno (X, 28 sgg. e XII, 16 sgg.). Gli esempi di carità e le parallele aberrazioni dell'invidia sono voci di spiriti vaganti per l'aria (XIII, 22 sgg. e XIV, 30 sgg.). Gli esempi di mansuetudine e gli atti malvagi commessi sotto l'impulso dell'ira vengono veduti in estasi (XV, 85 sgg. e XVII, 13 sgg.). Nel quarto balzo, dove si purga la negligenza, i penitenti hanno acquistato la facoltà di gridare da se stessi la doppia serie di esempi appropriati alla loro condizione (XVIII, 99 sgg. e 133 sgg.)

3) Fra le due serie di esempi, e quindi al centro della composizione, son collocati uno o due ma non più di tre spiriti che, docili al volere di Dio, sottomettono se stessi a un processo di purificazione per farsi degni di salire al cielo. A queste figure viventi è dato uno sviluppo proporzionato appunto al posto centrale ch'esse occupano, e perciò esse attraggono maggiormente la nostra attenzione. Ma sarebbe un errore considerarle come a sé stanti, senza rapporto a gli altri elementi e, in primo luogo, alle due serie di esempi. Ecco intanto una prima trascrizione di quanto siamo venuti dicendo.

ANIME

A			A
N			N
G	Esempi	SANTE	G
E	di virtù	IN VIA	E
L	perfette	DI PURIFICAZIONE	L
O			O

Questo schema fondamentale lascia aperta la possibilità di molte varianti, che verranno considerate volta per volta.

* * *

Dopo avere ridotto la poesia del *Purgatorio* a un nudo scheletro, daremo qualche prova di come rivestirla del suo proprio tessuto. Cominciamo dal 'primo balzo, quello della superbia, la cui vasta inquadratura impegna quattro canti (dal IX, 70 al XII, 114).

Uno spazio insolito è dato agli esempi di umiltà e ai paralleli esempi degli atti orrendi a cui la superbia conduce. Sono due serie di rilievi, ambedue scolpite nel marmo. Esse mettono veramente in rilievo non solo il tema speciale di questo primo balzo, ma anche il tema generale che si snoda attraverso i misteri del sacro monte. La sottomissione al volere di Dio, cioè l'umiltà, vi è infatti la nota dominante.

La prima serie (X, 28-96) si apre con l'umiltà di una creatura eletta, qual'è la Vergine, dinanzi al messaggio divino dell'annunciazione. Segue l'umiltà di re David: danzando per strada con i vestimenti in disordine

dinanzi all' arca dove sono custodite le tavole della Legge, si inchina anche egli alla volontà del Signore. La terza ed ultima rappresentazione di questa serie illustra l' umiltà di Traiano che si piega di fronte a una povera donna implorante.

L' autore dei tre pannelli non è né un essere umano, né madre natura. Dio stesso ha creato questo "visibile parlare." A Dante spetta soltanto di trasmettere a noi le marmoree visioni, cioè ridescriverele. Secondo la maniera medievale a cui si attiene, egli elogia la nobiltà della materia, la finezza dell' opera, i pregi sommi dell' artista. Dal marmo stesso emanano impressioni sensibili diverse, non solo visive, ma anche auditory e olfattive. La loro esattezza anzi che diminuire quel senso d' incredulità attonita che è proprio della più schietta ammirazione, lo accresce. Così nella rappresentazione di re David.

Dinanzi parea gente; e tutta quanta,
partita in sette cori, a' due mie' sensi
facea dir l'un *no*, l'altro *sì*, canta.
Similemente al fummo dell'ncensi
che v' era imaginato, li occhi e 'l naso
e al sì e al no discordi fensi.
Lì precedeva al benedetto vaso,
trecando alzato, l' umile salmista
e più e men che re era in quel caso.

(X, 58-66)

In tutte e tre le rappresentazioni le figure sono complementari o per analogia o per apposizione. All'*Ave* dell'Angelo risponde l'*Ecce ancilla Dei* della Vergine, docile come candida cera. Alla dimessa umiltà di re David, il dispetto pervicace di Micol. Alla maestà imperiale di Traiano, la semplicità della vedovella che gli chiede giustizia, mentre le insegne romane recingono in un fregio d'oro il pianto dell'una e la gloria dell'altro.

I' dico di Traiano imperadore;
e una vedovella li era al freno
di lacrime atteggiata e di dolore.
Intorno a lui parea calcato e pieno
di cavalieri, e l'aguglie nell'oro
sov'ressi in vista al vento si movieno.
La miserella intra tutti costoro
parea dicer: "Segnor, fammi vendetta
di mio figliuol ch'è morto, ond' io m' accoro".

(X, 76-84)

Sebbene anche la seconda serie di esempi sia effigiata nel marmo, Dante non più descrive, ma enumera. La nuova serie è difatti così ampia da comprendere ben tredici differenti misfatti la cui comune radice sta nella superba disposizione dell'animo (XII, 10-69). Con la disparità tra la prima

serie di tre esempi e la seconda di tredici, il Poeta si è creato un bel problema da risolvere. Si tratta di riintrodurre una simmetria in misure completamente asimmetriche. Un raffinato lavoro formale ha vinto la difficoltà. Ciascuno dei tredici esempi occupa né più né meno di una terzina. Dodici terzine, prese a quattro a quattro, formano tre gruppi. Una stessa parola, che si ripete incisivamente al principio di quattro terzine, contrassegna ogni gruppo.

Vedeal colui...
 Vedeal Briareo...
 Vedeal Timbreo...
 Vedeal Nembrót...

 O Niobe...
 O Saùl...
 O folle Aracne...
 O Roboam...

 Mostrava ancor...
 Mostrava come...
 Mostrava la ruina...
 Mostrava come...

Manca ancora la tredicesima terzina:

Vedeal Troia in cenere e in caverne:
 o Ilion come te bassa e vile
 mostrava il segno che lì si discerne.

Con le parole iniziali dei suoi tre versi essa riprende ciascuno dei tre precedenti gruppi, accentuando ancor più la disposizione triadica, e aggiungendovi uno di quei tocchi ornati ed estravaganti che acquistano maggior grazia alle simmetrie dei buoni artigiani. Quella che sembrava una semplice enumerazione raggiunge la raffinatezza di una strofe conclusa nelle proprie rispondenze al principio dei versi. L'arte ha equilibrato tra loro i tre esempi di virtù e i tredici esempi di misfatti.

I tre panelli della prima serie e le tre partizioni della seconda si bilanciano anche nel contenuto. Là avevamo l'umiltà di una creatura differente dalle altre creature umane (la Vergine) verso Dio; l'umiltà di un essere umano (David) sempre verso Dio; l'umiltà di un essere umano (Traiano) verso un essere umano (la vedovella). Qui abbiamo gli atti di sfida con cui esseri sovrumanì (Lucifero, Briareo, Timbreo, Nembrot) si rivoltarono a Dio; gli atti vari di usurpazione con cui esseri umani (Niobe, Saul, Aracne, Roboam) cercarono di prevalere sulla volontà e la provvidenza divina; gli atti di vanità e di orgoglio per cui esseri umani (Erifile, Sennacherib, Ciro, Oloferne) inflissero violenza e morte ad altri esseri umani.

Fuori dalla simmetria resta la tredicesima terzina extravagante. A dif-

ferenza degli altri esempi della sua serie, essa figura tutte le colpe immaginabili non di persone singole, ma di un intero popolo superbo.

Si potrebbe andare anche più in là con l'interpretazione. L'immagine di Troia resa bassa e vile, ridotta "in cenere e in caverne" in punizione della sua superbia, riproduce lo stile con cui nella Bibbia viene profetizzata la sorte d'Israele: cfr. Is. cap. II, dove i figli di questa nazione, umiliati ("humiliati") e curvi ("incurvabitur altitudo virorum") come le anime nel primo balzo del *Purgatorio*, si rifugiano "in scissuras petrarum et in cavernas saxorum." giacché nella *Commedia* anche le inflessioni stilistiche e le associazioni ch'esse risvegliano sono mezzi espressivi, Dante potrebbe aver qui alluso all'identità del destino di Troia e del destino d'Israele, convergenti nel fine provvidenziale della Roma cristiana. Ma con questa congettura noi vogliamo indicare non tanto ciò che è legittimo, quanto ciò che ci sembra illegittimo alla critica. Con lo spiegare tutto, col completare quei molti punti che Dante ha lasciato in sospeso, col determinare ciò che egli ha lasciato indeterminato, si soffoca il senso di mistero su cui si regge il poema sacro. Torniamo dunque su un terreno più sicuro.

Al centro della nostra inquadratura campeggiano tre figure, per le quali il Poeta non a caso ha stabilito proporzioni eguali: 36 versi a Omerto Aldobrandesco (XI, 37-72), 36 versi a Oderisi da Gubbio (XI, 73-108), 34 versi a Provenzan Salvani. Il centro dell'inquadratura è tenuto dunque da un vero e proprio trittico nel quale un nobile signore, un mediocre miniatutista e un uomo politico notissimo ai suoi tempi, appaiono l'uno accanto all'altro.

Come le figure, così le anime che in esse albergano si trovano in una condizione intermedia. La vita dei penitenti, riflettendo in sé le due opposte serie di esempi, mentre progredisce sul cammino della virtù, si porta dietro l'ombra dei falli commessi: Omerto il dispregio per ognuno che non fosse della sua stessa casta (XI, 63-64), Oderisi la scortesia verso i migliori maestri dell'arte sua (XI, 85-87), il Salvani la brama del potere e l'usurpazione (XI, 121-23). Per quello che essi hanno fatto pagano una retribuzione di fatto, cioè una pena corporale. Ma questo non è il momento di maggior rilievo nel *Purgatorio*. Su i 462 versi dell'inquadratura dei superbi, la descrizione della pena corporale non ne richiede che 9, tre rapide terzine. Similmente nei loro discorsi i penitenti gettano sulle colpe di cui si macchiarono un velo di pudore, usando di uno stile allusivo in contrasto con le aperte e circostanziate rievocazioni dell'inferno. Così vuole prima di tutto il sacramento della penitenza. I peccati sono stati rimessi da Dio. Volgersi indietro, richiamarli come se fossero ancora attuali, è proibito a Dante stesso, non appena la porta attraverso la quale egli è stato ammesso al purgatorio si è richiusa dietro le sue spalle:

e s'io avesse li occhi volti ad essa,
qual fòra stata al fallo degna scusa?

(X, 5-6)

Tutto il rilievo è invece dato alla retribuzione interiore per cui le anime acquistano le nuove virtù e quasi si identificano con esse. Su questa disciplina il trittico dei superbi ci insegna molte cose, purché noi rinunciamo a un'interpretazione psicologica. Come già nella *Vita nova* e come sempre nella *Commedia*, le tre figure sono appunto figurazioni di temi teologico-morali. Tutte e tre insieme illustrano le tre fasi della retribuzione interiore.

La prima fase consiste nell'abbassare ciò di cui l'uomo possa essersi esaltato in vita. Omberto si era gloriato dei suoi antenati e del suo nobile padre, ed ora, vincendo un orgoglio di cui si avvertono le ultime resistenze, dubita perfino che il nome di lui sia mai giunto agli orecchi di qualcuno:

Io fui latino e nato d'un gran tosc;
Guigielmo Aldobrandesco fu mio padre:
non so se 'l nome suo già mai fu vosco.

(XI, 58-60)

La seconda fase, più ricca di vita nova che non la prima, consiste nel compensare il prossimo delle offese recategli in vita. Qui nel primo balzo, Oderisi stabilisce la regola di questa carità che si fa sempre più calda nei balzi più vicini al Paradiso.

"Oh—diss'io lui—non se' tu Oderisi,
l'onor d'Agobbio e l'onor di quell'arte
ch'alluminar chiamata è in Parisi?"
"Frate—diss'elli—più ridon le carte
che pennelleggia Franco Bolognese:
l'onore è tutto or suole mio in parte."

(XI, 79-84)

Né Oderisi si limita a riversare amore e cortesia sui suoi debitori diretti. È lui che segnala al Poeta la terza figura del trittico dei superbi e ne narra la storia. Quest'uomo era riuscito a ridurre Siena tutta in suo potere, non si dice con quali mezzi. Eppure una volta, al colmo della sua potenza, si abbassò a chiedere l'elemosina nella pubblica piazza di quella città stessa di cui si era fatto padrone,

"e lì, per trar l' amico suo di pena
che sostenea nella prigion di Carlo,
si condusse a tremar per ogni vena"

(XI, 136-38)

Provenzan Salvani compare soltanto nel racconto del miniaturista e non mostra nemmeno di avvertire l'elogio che questi fa di lui. Col gettare un velo di silenzio sulla propria persona, egli compie il sacrificio maggiore dell' abito di superbia.

Il trittico, così concluso, figura dunque i gradi attraverso i quali la retribuzione interiore si perfeziona: distaccarsi da ciò di cui ci si era troppo

compiaciuti (Omberto), ripagare largamente le offese (Oderisi), sottomettere se stessi a un esercizio d'annichilamento (Provenzan Salvani).



L'abito dell'invidia si purga nel secondo balzo. Alla soglia di esso Virgilio eleva una invocazione al sole, generoso occhio di Dio:

"O dolce lume a cui fidanza i' entro
per lo novo cammin, tu ne conduci
—dicea—come condur si vuol quinc'entro.
Tu scaldi il mondo, tu sovr' esso luci:
s'altra cagione in contrario non pronta,
esser dén sempre li tuoi raggi duci."

(XIII, 16-21)

Il senso completo di queste due terzine va cercato negli elementi, figurativi e didascalici, dell'inquadratura di cui esse costituiscono una premessa tematica.

Le opere esemplari della carità e le aberrazioni dell'invidia occupano due sezioni eguali di 15 versi (XIII, 22-36 e XIV, 127-41). Nel mezzo si erge un trittico. Ciascuna delle tre anime, all'apparire di una creatura che riveste il proprio corpo mortale, non può trattenere, miste alla maraviglia, le espressioni di una curiosità affettuosa e gioiosa. Appena Dante ha rivelato a Sapia la grazia di cui egli gode, costei reagisce con sorridente gentilezza. Ogni traccia della passione che oscurò la mente di una donna che si allietava dei danni altri, è cancellata:

"Oh, questa è a udir sì cosa nova
—rispose—che gran segno è che Dio t' ami:
però col priego tuo talor mi giova."

(XIII, 145-47)

Rinieri di Calboli, a sua volta, è ormai così avanzato nella via contraria alla invidia, che cede al suo compagno di spiazzone Guido del Duca non uno ma due privilegi. Il primo è quello di accertarsi chi mai possa essere l'ospite insolito del purgatorio:

"Non so chi sia, ma so che non è solo:
domandal tu che più gli ti avvicini,
e dolcemente, sì che parli, acco'llo."

(XIV, 4-6)

Il secondo privilegio che Rinieri, quasi annullando la propria persona, cede a Guido, è di lasciare che solo quest'ultimo discorra delle condizioni di Romagna, la regione dove entrambi erano nati, entrambi signori di castella, ognuno timoroso di perder "podere, grazia, onore e fama" se

altri li acquistasse (cfr. XVIII, 18-120). In diversi gradi tutte e tre le anime hanno convertito lo sguardo livido dell'invidia nella calda luce della carità fraterna. Non c'è bisogno di insistere su queste movenze perché esse ripetono, *mutatis mutandis*, le forme della purgazione della superbia.

Tuttavia, mentre nel balzo dei superbi il tema dei gradi e modi della purgazione esaurisce il significato dell'inquadratura, nel balzo degli invidi esso è subordinato a un altro motivo che costituisce la peculiarità della nuova figurazione. Sapia si riferisce ai suoi concittadini senesi come a "gente vana" che si perde in imprese impossibili (XIII, 151-53). Guido del Duca, anche a nome di Rinieri di Calboli, si dilunga a rovesciare impropri sulle genti di Romagna chiamandole porci, botoli ringhiosi, lupi, infide volpi. La sua stessa famiglia e quella del suo compagno d'espiazione vengono messe alla gogna (XIV, 28 sgg.). Eppure se queste anime, dopo essersi mostrate così premurose con Dante e tra loro, si lasciano andare a discorsi tutt'altro che lusinghieri, ciò non sarà per invidia ma, al contrario, a fin di bene. Questo motivo era anch'esso annunciato nella splendida invocazione al sole. I suoi raggi vi stavano come una guida placida e benigna, ma condizionatamente: "s' altra cagione in contrario non pronta." Quale è dunque la cagione delle adirate invettive che a intervalli ritornano nelle tre cantiche?

* * *

La Commedia offre due soluzioni di questo problema. Esse suonano perfettamente identiche, tranne che l'una è figurativa, l'altra esplicativa. La prima si trova nell'*Inferno*, e proprio nel cerchio degli iracondi (VIII, 31-63). Uno dei dannati rivolge a Dante una legittima domanda:

[...] "Chi se' tu che vieni anzi ora?"

In cambio ne riceve una risposta perfida e una domanda sprezzante:

[...] "S'i' vegno, non rimango;
ma tu chi se' che sì se' fatto brutto?"

Nonostante la provocazione, il remissivo peccatore ha delle parole dalle quali traspare un gran bisogno di pietà:

[...] "Vedi che son un che piango."

Anzi che pietoso il Poeta si fa più e più aggressivo:

E io a lui: "Con piangere e con lutto,
spirito maledetto, ti rimani;
ch'i' ti conosco, ancor sie lordo tutto."

Soltanto a questo punto lo spirito maledetto reagisce e tenta di avventarsi contro il suo interlocutore. Virgilio è lì a respingerlo

dicendo: "Via costà con li altri cani."

L'episodio sembrerebbe volgere alla fine. Virgilio infatti invoca la benedizione del cielo per la madre dell'inflessibile discepolo. Ma questi formula un desiderio. Ora gli piacerebbe assistere, e presto, al maggiore strazio possibile di quel reietto. Virgilio lo rassicura:

"di tal disio converrà che tu goda."

Il godimento riesce perfetto. Anche dopo aver percorso l'inferno il purgatorio e il paradiso, ed esser tornato in terra a riscrivere le sue esperienze, il Poeta ringrazia Dio per lo strazio ch'egli ha veduto di Filippo Argenti.

Secondo il senso comune e la comune psicologia tutto l'episodio è aberrante. Le parti sono invertite. I due Poeti provocano deliberatamente l'ira di uno sventurato che per questa colpa soffre le pene eterne, e si comportano come se essi stessi unissero all'iracondia sfrenata una insensibilità gelida.

La chiave della infernale figurazione ci viene offerta nel terzo balzo del *Purgatorio*, dove le anime si disavvelenano dai fumi dell'ira sottponendosi a uno spirituale lavacro (dal XV, 85 al XVIII, 70). Al centro della composizione sta un'unica figura. Questo spirito che in vita fu certo impulsivo, ora parla assennatamente del libero arbitrio, dei poteri ecclesiastici e delle leggi civili, ossia degli strumenti interiori ed esteriori che frenano i temperamenti e le passioni degli uomini, prima di tutto l'ira, la più sfrenata. Il contrappasso è chiaro. La figura di Marco Lombardo, assai scarsa di valori plastici, sembra ciò non di meno uscita da un affresco medievale. La si potrebbe immaginare come reggesse in mano un rotolo di pergamena su cui fosse scritto un lungo discorso.

Ma l'angelo della misericordia che termina questa inquadratura recitando la beatitudine più adatta alla situazione, offre una sorpresa. Nella sua bocca il testo evangelico: "Beati pacifici: quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur", (Matt. V, 9) si cambia con una variazione non indifferente in "Beati pacifici: che son senz'ira mala" (XVII, 68-69). Nella *Commedia* esser pacifici significa essere senza ira mala, ma non significa essere senza ira buona. Di questa Dio e i suoi santi fanno un uso abbondante per raddrizzare le storture del mondo.

Quanto si è svolto nell'*Inferno* figura appunto il contrasto tra l'ira mala e l'ira buona. Filippo Argenti, condannato a una pena eterna, continua e continuerà a rodersi nella rabbia per cui si rese triste in vita. I due Poeti si adeguano al giudizio di Dio e divengono i sottomessi ma tremendi esecutori della sua ira buona.

Questo è un caso estremo, l'inferno essendo un luogo di dolore senza redenzione. Altrimenti l'ira buona ha per suo oggetto gli uomini di questa terra, i quali finché hanno vita non sono mai perduti, e per suo fine la loro salvezza. Ad essi l'ira buona si indirizza nel tono rude di quelle invettive dantesche, dalle quali non manca mai un accento di partecipe accoramento.

In una di esse, famosa per il suo eccesso, l'infamia di una città toscana appare come una macchia deforme in mezzo a un giardino pieno di poesia:

Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona!

(*Inf.* XXXIII, 79-80)

La corruzione pubblica e privata della Romagna, con tutto lo sdegno e tutte le male parole ch'essa suscita, non sopprime le nostalgie di un tempo che fu migliore,

"le donne e i cavalier, li affanni e li agi
che ne 'nvogliava amore e cortesia."

(*Purg.* XIV, 109-10)

All'invettiva di San Pietro contro la curia papale partecipa Beatrice tramutando sembianza e partecipa il firmamento intero:

"Quelli ch'usurpa in terra il luogo mio,
il luogo mio, il luogo mio, che vaca
ne la presenza del Figliuol di Dio,
fatt'ha del cimiterio mio cloaca
del sangue e de la puzza; onde 'l perverso
che cadde di qua su, là giù si placa."
Di quel color che per lo sole avverso
nube dipigne da sera e da mane
vid'io allora tutto il ciel cosperso.

(*Par.* XXVII, 22-30)

L'oscuramento del cielo è il segno minaccioso dell'ira buona che nel *Paradiso* (XII, 9) viene identificata con il "buon zelo."

* * *

Insieme con l'ira buona entrano nella *Commedia* tante altre e più miti passioni. Dietro questo trasferimento di sentimenti umani nei regni ultraterreni c'è Sant'Agostino, con la sua motivata condanna dell'impassibilità stoica, il suo insegnamento intorno al retto e generoso uso degli affetti, la sua fede nell'amore, nella felicità, nella bellezza della vita eterna alla quale sono chiamati insieme le anime e i corpi di ciasuno dei mortali. Dal principio alla fine la *Divina Commedia* è seminata di questioni di teologia tomistica e scolastica. Ma l'impeto emotivo e intellettuale del poema sacro, questo addurre—non si dice riddure—religione e teologia all'esperienza personale per soffrirne e gioirne, resta agostiniano.

Incontestatamente agostiniana è la dottrina dell'amore e delle sue versioni, che connette insieme le tre cantiche. Quella dottrina la troviamo esposta nella cantica centrale e qui, con osservanza di tutte le regole della

simmetria, nel IV balzo che tra i sette occupa il posto centrale. Ci avvicineremo a questo centro movendo dalla periferia. Avremo così occasione di confermare e forse chiarire alcuni argomenti già acquisiti alla critica dantesca.

Anzitutto secondo quali criteri le anime vengono associate tra loro nei gironi del pozzo infernale e nei balzi del sacro monte. Nell'*Inferno* la regola

simile qui con simile è sepolto

(Inf. IX, 130)

non vale soltanto per gli eretici del VI cerchio, ai quali il verso propriamente si riferisce. I suicidi vengono associati con i suicidi, gli omicidi con gli omicidi, i ladri con i ladri, i traditori con i traditori. Ad ogni modo ciò che decide a qual compagnia uno spirto dannato debba appartenere, è un'azione da lui commessa in vita—suicidio, omicidio, furto, tradimento e via di seguito—ripetutamente o anche una volta sola.

Anche nel *Purgatorio* simile è associato con simile, ma secondo un altro criterio. La prima persona che si incontra sulla spiaggia del sacro monte è Catone, un suicida. Una tale eccezione appare assai strana. Stranezza ancora maggiore appena si rammenta che, come ogni altra anima del purgatorio, anche il dignitoso custode è un'anima santa (I, 80). Chiunque venga ammesso al secondo regno, infatti, fruisce virtualmente della beatitudine celeste perchè, nel peggiore dei casi, la retribuzione da pagarsi a Dio "oltre la gran sentenza non può ire" (X, 111). Tuttavia il veglio solo il quale, sebbene abbia commesso suicidio, ispira tanta reverenza al solo vederlo, lungi dal costituire una incongruenza, contiene in sé, in senso figurato, la nuova regola del purgatorio.

Qui il destino delle anime non è più legato ai fatti ch'esse hanno promosso in vita. Questo è appunto il tema che Dante sviluppa nei primi otto canti dell'antipurgatorio. Allettamenti mondani, peccati orribili, violenti casi di morte, atti di negligenza nell'esercizio degli uffici più sacri vengono rievocati, per far presente che la condizione delle anime è ormai distaccata da quanto esse hanno fatto nella vita terrena. Qualcosa era già in loro, forse una retta intenzione, o qualcosa è intervenuto—un subitaneo pentimento e una grazia non commensurabile ai meriti—che le ha trasportate in una vita nuova.

L'adultera Francesca soffre le pene eterne nel secondo cerchio dell'*inferno* e il sodomita Brunetto nel settimo. Una grande distanza separa quei due peccatori e i loro compagni. Dopo i lussuriosi le cui trasgressioni non violarono l'ordine di natura, vengono i golosi, gli avari e prodighi, gli iracondi, gli eretici, i tiranni e gli omicidi, i suicidi. Quando finalmente tra i sodomiti riconosciamo Brunetto, Paolo e Francesca e i loro sospiri sono tanto lontani, sepolti sotto tanti altri orrori, che nessuno li ricorda più. Questa

distanza viene completamente abolita nel purgatorio. Lussuriosi normali e anormali formano insieme la vivente corona del settimo ed ultimo balzo.

Le associazioni, dunque, e le affinità che vengono alla luce nel *Purgatorio* non dipendono dagli atti esteriori né dalle varie categorie alle quali la moltitudine di questi atti stessi possa ridursi. Perciò lussuriosi normali e anormali vengono qui riuniti in una unica compagnia, così come un vanitoso miniaturista può stare in mezzo tra un nobile che ha tiranneggiato la plebe e un uomo politico senza scrupoli.

Le affinità del purgatorio dipendono da radici profonde, superbia, invidia, ira, tepidezza, avarizia, gola, lussuria. Senza dubbio questa lista fa parte anche del vocabolario infernale. Ma nella prima cantica quei nomi denotano soprattutto i molteplici frutti delle radici del male, le estrinsecazioni esteriori o quelli che propriamente si dicono peccati di fatto. Nella seconda cantica, invece, denotano soprattutto le radici stesse, le disposizioni interne delle anime o quelli che propriamente si dicono gli abiti. Dante ha riassunto tutto ciò in un verso solo, definendo il purgatorio come il divino strumento

che 'l malo amor de l' anime disusa.

(X, 2)

Dalla differenza tra peccati di fatto e abiti dipende anche il diverso ordinamento dell'*Inferno* e del *Purgatorio*. I balzi del *Purgatorio* risultano tanto ridotti di numero rispetto ai cerchi e cerchietti dell'*Inferno*, quanto gli abiti viziati sono ridotti rispetto ai peccati di fatto. Per tornare al balzo dei superbi, quale proporzione numerica possa esservi tra la radice e i suoi frutti, si vede raffrontando l'abito stesso della superbia con i misfatti elencati nella seconda serie di tredici esempi. D'altronde, imperniando il *Purgatorio* eminentemente su gli abiti, Dante può omettere o sembrare di omettere qualche peccato di fatto. È il caso, com'è noto, del peccato di eresia, il quale è implicito nell'abito di superbia. Vero è peraltro che i molti misfatti contro la divinità contenuti in quella serie di esempi, prima di tutto la rivolta di Lucifero, abbracciano ogni e qualunque setta eretica. Se sommassimo insieme tutti i peccati di fatto a cui accennano gli esempi nei setti balzi del *Purgatorio*, otterremmo una lista assai più lunga di quella che ci si offre nel canto XI dell'*Inferno*.

Questo canto è appunto una lista o meglio un vero e proprio schema di peccati di fatto, il cui ordinamento ricorda senza dubbio l'*Eтика* aristotelica. Ma dietro lo schema la dottrina del giusto mezzo, che darebbe a questa materia un'impronta davvero aristotelica, manca completamente. In realtà in quel canto non c'è nessuna dottrina, ma solo degli s punti che potrebbero venire sviluppati in un modo o nell'altro, per es. che la frode impegna le facoltà razionali dell'uomo e percio più spiace a Dio (*Inf.* XI, 25-26). Certo vi si cercherebbe invano come quelle facoltà razionali si

pervertano fino a farsi fraudolente. Questo problema non riguarda più i peccati di fatto, ma le radici del male, gli abiti. La soluzione non appartiene all'*Inferno*, ma al *Purgatorio*.

Eccoci dunque al IV balzo. Qui si rigenerano coloro nei quali l'amore bruciaccia sotto uno spesso strato di cenere. Ottima occasione per inserire in questa inquadratura (dal XVII, 70 al XIX, 51) un esauriente discorso sull'amore, sulle sue possibili perversioni, sui consequenti abiti cattivi e sull'ordinamento del sacro monte (dal XVII, 79 al XVIII, 75).

Tutti gli oggetti indistintamente, essendo creature di Dio, sono in sé buoni. Quegli oggetti che più si confanno alla nostra sensibilità, lasciano in noi delle immagini piacevoli. Le immagini, alla loro volta, non solo svegliano ed attraggono a sé i desideri, ma anche li dirigono verso la fruizione degli oggetti, nei quali essi trovano il loro appagamento. Le immagini, dunque, formano gli anelli di congiunzione tra desideri ed oggetti.

Se l'uomo non riesce a dominare il gioco instabile delle sue immagini, i desideri da esse dipendenti si pervertono, e tutti i rapporti si falsano. Ma la creatura prediletta di Dio possiede nel libero arbitrio un perfetto strumento per regolare l'assenso da darsi ai prodotti dell'immaginazione, e quindi per disciplinare gli impulsi dei desideri.

Le perversioni più gravi conducono a vere e proprie sostituzioni. Le immagini del bene proprio, cioè, si sovrappongono così prepotentemente alle immagini del bene altrui, che ne nascono superbia, invidia e ira. I desideri si appagano allora nel male del prossimo.

Le perversioni minori non conducono a questo delirante scambio di valori. Le immagini di certi oggetti non vengono rimosse dal loro posto. Ma, per errata valutazione ed errato assenso, i desideri ad esse connessi si fanno sproporzionati, e sproporzionati appagamenti si cercano negli oggetti. Ciò può essere o per difetto o per eccesso. Dante chiama quel difetto "negligenza" e "tepidezza" (XVIII, 107-08). L'eccesso, meglio identificato, sono i vizi dell'avarizia, della gola e della lussuria.

Il discorso ha avuto luogo mentre i due Poeti, raggiunto il quarto balzo, si trovano tra l'angelo e la prima serie di esempi. Tra l'altra serie e l'altro angelo apparirà una figura dai tratti anche troppo marcati:

mi venne in sogno una femmina balba
ne li occhi guercia, e sovra i piè distorta,
con le man monche, e di colore scialba.

(XIX, 7-9)

Benché oggettivamente parlando essa sia una vera sconcezza, soggettivamente Dante nel suo "intento," ossia, secondo la terminologia scolastica, nella sua immaginazione, la percepisce come piena di allettamenti sensuali:

"Io son—cantava—io son dolce serena
che i marinari in mezzo mar dismago,
tanto son di piacere a sentir piena."

(XIX, 19-21)

Ed ecco una forza illuminante accorre a raddrizzare nel Poeta la fantasia (XIX, 25-33), la quale, anche secondo le più popolari leggende del medioevo, è per eccellenza l'organo insidiato dal diavolo.

Il discorso sull'amore, sulle false immagini, sui desideri traviati viene così bilanciato, se non in estensione certo in intensità, da una figurazione che ne riprende simmetricamente quanto è almeno figurabile.

A		A		A
N	Discorso sulla	A		N
G	perversione del-	T		G
E	le immagini	Esempi	Esempi	E
L	e dei desideri	DI		L
O		SAN		O
		ZENO		

Tra il discorso e la figurazione lo spazio che resta libero per le due serie di esempi e per il personaggio centrale è scarso, ma è proprio quanto occorre. Siamo infatti nel balzo della tepidezza, la quale si purga mediante l'esercizio della virtù a lei opposta, la sollecitudine. Anch'egli sollecito, Dante abbrevia e comprime ogni cosa in 58 versi (XVIII, 88-145). Gente fretolosa passa oltre e, senza nemmeno mostrare curiosità per la insolita presenza di un essere umano, grida gli esempi. Essi giungono a noi in uno stile piuttosto contratto e alquanto ermetico. L'unica anima santa che si intrattiene un poco con il Poeta, ha fretta anch'essa. Il veronese Abate di San Zeno non dice nulla di sè e mostra il suo zelo nel biasimare brevemente la negligenza altrui.

Facendo il miglior uso possibile di questo scarso materiale, cercheremo di risolvere una difficoltà a cui una definizione della tepidezza sembra dar luogo.

"Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende
nel qual si quieti l'animo, e desira;
per che di giugner lui ciascun contendere.
Se lento amore in lui veder vi tira
o a lui acquistar, questa cornice,
dopo lungo penter, ve ne martira."

(XVII, 127-32)

I tiepidi si rendono dunque colpevoli, nella vita terrena, di lento amore verso "un bene" nel quale avrebbero potuto quietare l'animo loro. Qual'è questo bene, è forse Dio come intende la generalità dei commentatori? Per contribuire a un'interpretazione tutt'ora incerta, cominciamo col leggere le due serie di esempi. Qui sotto li abbiamo dinanzi a noi nella perfetta simmetria in cui Dante li ha tenuti, quelli di sollecitudine a sinistra, quelli di trasgressioni di fatto per tepidezza d'animo a destra.

"Maria corse con fretta alla montagna;
e Cesare, per soggiogare Ilerda,
punse Marsilia, e poi corse in Ispagna.
"Ratto, ratto che il tempo non si perda
per poco amor—gridavan li altri
appresso—
che studio di ben far grazia rinverda."
(XVIII, 100-05)

Di retro a tutti dicean: "Prima fue
morta la gente a cui il mar s'aperse,
che vedesse Iordan le rede sue;
e quella che l'affano non sofferse
fino alla fine col figlio d'Anchise,
se stessa a vita senza gloria offerse."

(XVIII, 133-38)

A sinistra: la sollecitudine di Maria nel visitare Elisabetta sua parente; la sollecitudine di Cesare nel compiere i suoi doveri politici; l'ammonimento biblico "Nolite negligere, nolite cessare" (*Jud. XVIII, 9*) che si applica a ogni uomo e a ogni circostanza. A destra: la negligenza della gente ebraica nel seguire Mosè (*Num. XIV, 1-39*); le negligenze della gente di Ulisse, più precisamente di due suoi compagni che stanchi d'avventure lo abbandonarono (*Verg. Aen. V, 604 sgg.*). Convertendo gli ultimi due esempi negativi nella loro positiva virtù abbiamo ancora la sollecitudine nelle imprese di ogni genere, quelle storico-nazionali corrispondenti a un disegno divino, come quelle individuali che fanno avanzare esperienza e scienza.

Tutto ciò forma di nuovo uno di quegli schemi che erano molto diffusi nel medioevo, e precisamente uno schema dei beni: beni familiari (la visita a Elisabetta), beni politici (Cesare), beni provvidenziali (Mosè), beni dell'ingegno (Ulisse), e si aggiunga, come vuole il terzo esempio della prima serie, lo "studio di ben far," "ben far" apparente qui e altrove nella *Commedia* (*Inf. VI, 81*) nel senso indubbio di opere buone. La figura ibrida dell'abate di San Zéno, mezzo ecclesiastico e mezzo amministratore, ricapitola in se il contenuto degli esempi.

Quell' "un bene" s... quale "uno qualsivoglia dei beni" che gli uomini possono proporsi a fine della loro esistenza. I beni supremi della fede vi sono senza dubbio inclusi, se Dante ce ne informa altrove (cfr. XXII, 88-93). Ma tutta l'iconografia di questo balzo—il passo rapido delle anime, la loro concisione, gli esempi a cui esse si riferiscono, nonché il fatto, unico nel purgatorio, ch'esse non recitano nessuna preghiera—suggerisce non tanto i beni della vita contemplativa, quanto quelli della vita attiva. La stessa grammatica consiglia un'interpretazione molto lata. Se la lezione del Vandelli—"un bene [...] dove si quieti l'animo"—è la giusta, il congiuntivo lascia aperte molte possibilità. Una specificazione di tutti i beni possibili e una corrispondente specificazione dell'abito di tepidezza e negligenza verso di essi, avrebbe portato con sé un interminabile allungamento del sacro monte.

* * *

Il trionfo dell'amore puro e delle sue virtù vien preparato fin dal V balzo (dal XIX, 52 al XXI, 6), dove la scena finale è tutta bontà e gloria.

Due penitenti stanno emendando i loro abiti macchiati dall'avido

desiderio di beni terreni. L'uno, Adriano V, accusa se stesso dei propri peccati e, giacché la dignità papale, perfino essa, si estingue là dove le anime son tutte eguali al cospetto di Dio, non accetta che Dante si prosterni dinanzi a lui.

"Qual cagion—disse—in giù così ti torse?"
 E io a lui: "Per vostra dignitate
 mia coscienza dritto mi rimorse".
 "Drizza le gambe, lèvati su, frate
 —rispuose.—Non errar: conservo sono
 teco e con li altri ad una potestate."

(XIX, 130-35)

L'altro penitente, Ugo Capeto, capostipite della dinastia di Francia, si fa egualmente e forse maggiormente conservo alla medesima potestate. A designare se stesso, egli sceglie una epigrafe, disonorevole in terra, ma gradita in cielo:

"figliuol fui io d' un beccao di Parigi."

(XX, 52)

Essendosi anch'egli spogliato della sua dignità mondana, santamente inveisce contro l'avarizia dei suoi discendenti e successori.

Tuttavia l'inquadratura comprende non due, ma tre figure, e la terza non ha più nulla a che vedere con le precedenti. È l'anima di Stazio, il poeta latino che si convertì segretamente alla nuova fede e fu "chiuso cristian". Finiti di scontare proprio ora i suoi peccati, esce di purgazione, mentre il sacro monte trema al prodigo, e da ogni pendice si eleva il *Te Deum laudamus*.

La presenza di Stazio nel V balzo pone un nuovo problema iconografico. Nello schema usato finora—le figure dei penitenti incasellate tra le due serie d'esempi—non c'è posto per un'anima perfetta e felice, diversa da tutte le altre anime incontrate nel purgatorio. Con un semplice ritocco, mantenendo gli elementi soliti, ma anteponendo la prima figura alla prima serie di esempi (15 versi, XX, 19-33) e la seconda figura alla seconda serie di esempi (15 versi, XX, 103-17), Dante ha creato lo spazio per un'anima alla quale si deve una distinzione speciale. Ecco dunque come risulta, divisa in tre pannelli, la nuova composizione.

A		E		E		A
N		S		S		N
G	Adriano V	E	Ugo Capeto	E	Stazio	G
E		M		M		E
L		P		P		L
O		I		I		O

Questo allineamento di anime potenzialmente sante con un'anima attualmente santificata lascia presentire la vicinanza del paradiso.

L'incontro di Stazio con i due altri Poeti offre materia per una *agnitio* elaborata in ogni particolare, con sorprese, proteste di ammirazione e di gratitudine, come le straordinarie circostanze e gli straordinari personaggi richiedono. A Virgilio Stazio deve s'egli fu poeta:

"Al mio ardor fuor seme le faville
che mi scaldar de la divina fiamma
onde sono allumati più di mille;
de l'Eneida dico, la qual mamma
fummi e fummi nutrice poetando:
senz'essa non fermai peso di dramma."

(XXI, 94-99)

A Virgilio Stazio deve la sua conversione:

"Facesti come quei che va di notte,
che porta il lume dietro e sé non giova,
ma dopo sé fa le persone dotte,
quando dicesti: 'Secol si rinova;
torna giustizia e primo tempo umano,
e progenie scende dal ciel nova.'
Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano."

(XXII, 67-73)

Di quei dialoghi una parte, compiuta in se stessa, dalla quale emergono Stazio e Virgilio in quanto legati da affinità poetica, coincide col terzo pannello della presente inquadratura. L'altra parte, dalla quale emergono Stazio e Virgilio in quanto poeti che hanno o presentito o accettato il cristianesimo, avviva quel poco attraente cunicolo attraverso il quale, come sempre nel *Purgatorio*, si passa al balzo superiore (XXII, 7-115). Quanto si svolge tra i due poeti latini, infatti, si lega strettamente agli ultimi due balzi e ne è la prefigurazione. In essi amicizia e poesia prevalgono sulla concupiscentia della gola e della lussuria.

* * *

Nel VI balzo, tra i golosi, Dante ravvisa la faccia di un fiorentino, al quale egli così si indirizza:

[. . .] "Se tu riduci a mente
qual fosti meco e qual io teco fui,
ancor fia grave il memorar presente."

(XXIII, 115-17)

Le gravi memorie sottintendono i gravi screzi intercorsi tra Dante stesso e Forese Donati. Screzi personali di cui testimonia una assai nota *Tenzione*

giovanile, nella quale essi, tra roventi ingiurie reciproche, non risparmiano né le loro famiglie né le loro donne. E screzi politici, Forese essendo il fratello di quel Corso Donati a cui si deve l'esilio di Dante e le consequenti durezze.

Questi aspri dissidi si convertono in una amicizia nostalgica. Dolcemente indotti dalle domande di Dante, Forese prima paga una comune *satisfactio* alle donne di casa Donati, Nella, la vedova che nel mondo prega per lui, e la sorella Piccarda, già assurta alla gloria dei cieli (XXIII, 79-93 e XXIV, 10-15). Quindi paga una ben cara *satisfactio* alla sventura di Dante stesso, profetizzando la morte maledetta di Corso.

"Or va—diss'el—che quei che più n'ha colpa,
veggi'io a coda d'una bestia tratto
inver la valle ove mai non si scolpa."

(XXIV, 82-84)

L'inquadratura di questo VI balzo (dal XXII, 130 al XXIV, 154) riproduce la formula solita, ma con una variante. Le appassionate rievocazioni dei due fiorentini vengono interrotte, per lasciare frattanto la parola a una seconda anima, e poi riprese non meno fervidamente. Tanta premura è necessaria alla riconversione di un'amicizia guastata da brutti ricordi.

Non è ora il luogo di parlare distesamente di quella seconda anima, Bonagiunta Orbiciani. Senza dubbio la devozione di lui a Dante armonizza con la presente inquadratura. Ma, come vedremo, il rimatore lucchese segna anche la chiave di volta in un'altra struttura che congiunge verticalmente tutte le sezioni del *Purgatorio*, dal principio alla fine. In questa struttura verticale, alla quale qui solo accenniamo, presto ritroveremo Bonagiunta.

*
* *

Intanto diamo uno sguardo all'inquadratura dei lussuriosi. L'ultima composizione del purgatorio, discostandosi dallo schema solito, si divide chiaramente in due parti, l'una descrittiva (dal XXV, 109 al XXVI, 87), l'altra per così dire drammatica (dal XXVI, 88 alla fine del canto).

La parte descrittiva consiste in una visione generale delle pene e delle anime che le soffrono.

Quivi la ripa fiamma in fuor balestra
e la cornice spirà fato in suso
che la riflette e via da lei sequestra.

(XXV, 112-14)

Dentro al grande incendio si svolge una rappresentazione, i cui movimenti sono tutti ritmati in periodi e cadenze. Due simili ma non identiche schiere di penitenti, i lussuriosi normali e i lussuriosi anormali, cerchiano il balzo in direzione opposta, ora venendosi incontro, ora allontandosi. Quando son

men vicine, ambedue le schiere cantano un inno della Chiesa che castiga la lussuria, e vanno intercalando al canto la recitazione corale di esempi di castità (6 versi, XXV, 127-32). Quando le schiere si trovano faccia a faccia, gli spiriti di cui si compone l'una scambiano il purissimo abbraccio dell'amore cristiano con gli spiriti dell'altra:

Lì veggio d' ogni parte farsi presta
ciascun' ombra e baciasi una con una
senza restar, contente a breve festa.

(XXVI, 31-33)

Nel separarsi di nuovo, quelle ombre rimproverano a se stesse i tristi frutti dell'inclinazione a cui si abbandonarono in vita, alto gridando esempi di pervertimenti, a seconda del caso omosessuali e bisessuali (6 versi, XXVI, 37-42). Indi i movimenti circolari si ripetono.

Poi come grue ch'a le montagne Rife
volasser parte e parte inver l'arene,
queste del gel, quelle del sole schife,
l'una gente sen va, l'altra sen vène;
e tornan, lagrimando, a' primi canti
e al gridar che più lor si convene.

(XXVI, 43-48)

Tornano, cioè, a cantare la comune preghiera e a recitare gli esempi di virtù, i quali, meglio che non gli esempi di peccati, si addicono alle anime sante.

*
* *

La parte drammatica, che segue a questa descrizione, perderebbe molto del suo valore se la considerassimo come per sé stante. Essa forma il culmine di quella struttura verticale, a cui accennavamo, dove Dante ha illustrato il tema che più era il suo: la conversione della poesia e dei poeti nella virtù dell'umiltà. In questa struttura preparata fin dall'antipurgatorio con abilità incredibile, in questa *scala Dei* adattata a se stesso, Dante ha inserito la propria persona e il proprio processo di purificazione. A noi non resta che registrare i gradi attraverso i quali egli è passato.

Appena giunto sulla spiaggia del sacro monte, Dante si accompagna all'anima di un musicista a cui evidentemente fu legato da affinità di vita e di gusti, e gli chiede di intonare ancora, come altre volte in terra, un amoroso canto.

Amor che nelle mente mi ragiona,
cominciò elli allor si dolcemente,
che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona.

(II, 112-14)

Il Poeta, dimentico di ogni altra cura, si abbandona alla musica, e ai versi di cui è egli stesso l'autore. Solo il richiamo di Catone, il rigido custode, riesce a distoglierlo da quegli ozi che implicano una compiacenza di sé riprovevole.

Salito al primo balzo del purgatorio, il Poeta deve ascoltare per bocca di Oderisi da Gubbio alcune parole che valgono per una tentazione:

“Credette Cimabue ne la pintura
tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido,
sì che la fama di colui è scura.
Così ha tolto l' uno a l'altro Guido
la gloria de la lingua, e forse è nato
chi l'uno e l'altro cacerà di nido.”

(XI, 94-99)

L'allusione lusinghiera non viene raccolta con manifestazioni di compiacenza, ma nemmeno riceve smentita alcuna. Dante si trova tra i superbi. Sulla sua fronte sta inciso il segno di un peccato che gli peserà anche dopo esserne stato assolto (XIII, 135-37). Il suo tacere riflette questa sua condizione.

Una lunga e varia esperienza di anime che si convertono a Dio, e il tema, riaffiorando, porta con sé la crisi. Bonagiunta Orbiciani, rimatore anch'egli, ha già scambiato qualche parola con l'uomo privilegiato, apparso lì prodigiosamente, e ha sospettato la sua identità. Per accertarsene, gli si rivolge col rispetto dell'inferiore verso il superiore. Evita di chiedergli il nome, ma vi allude attraverso l'opera per cui quel nome si è reso famoso.

“Ma dì s' i' veggio qui colui che fòre
trasse le nuove rime, cominciando
Donne ch' avete intelletto d'amore.”

(XXIV, 49-51)

Di fronte all'*incipit* della sua canzone, Dante non si compiace, né tace. Senza esitare un istante, ora egli attribuisce il merito e la novità della sua arte a un potere che viene dall'alto.

[...] “I' mi son un che quando
amor mi spira, noto, e a qual modo
ch' e' ditta dentro vo significando.”

(XXIV, 52-54)

Sul balzo supremo, come su un altare, lo scrivano ispirato sacrifica infine ogni pretesa di eccellenza verso altri rimatori. L'abdicazione avviene nelle mani del primo Guido che fu il comune maestro:

[...] il padre
mio e de gli altri miei miglior che mai
rime d'amore usar dolci e leggiadre.

(XXVI, 97-99)

Guido Guinizelli, alla sua volta, porta il suo contributo a questo crescendo,
e addita uno spirito più innanzi. Questi veramente

"fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno."

(XXVI, 117)

Arnaldo Daniello vince la gara dell'umiltà sottraendosi ad essa. Egli, che soltanto piange e va cantando, è l'ultima figura del sacro monte dove le anime si purificano tra il cordoglio dei falli trascorsi e il sorriso della speranza:

"Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan;
consiros vei la passada folor,
e vei jausen lo joi qu'esper, denan."

(XXVI, 142-44)

Con questi versi provenzali Dante, rinunciando al parlar materno suo proprio, ha compiuto il sacrificio maggiore che l'umiltà possa chiedere a un poeta.

* * *

L'esame delle strutture della seconda cantica ci suggerisce una conclusione anzitutto negativa. Il tema del *Purgatorio* non si estingue in una apologia delle virtù cardinali. Le anime sante soffrono per i peccati che esse hanno commessi, e per quelli che le generazioni umane continueranno a commettere. L'origine del male sta senza dubbio in un decadimento delle facoltà che, in terra, regolano la vita privata e civile dei figli d'Adamo. Ma le anime sante non appartengono alla terra. Il loro sicuro destino è nel regno dei cieli. Dal purgatorio non salgono al paradiso riconvertendo superbia, invidia, ira, tepidezza, avarizia, gola e lussuria in abiti atti a una vita temporale, da cui esse si sono distaccate per sempre.

Il tema del *Purgatorio* è la riconversione degli abiti umani nelle virtù sovrabbondanti dell'umiltà e dell'amore. Questo tema si trova enunciato e spiegato nel primo canto, con quel linguaggio dantesco in cui parole e figurazioni concorrono allo stesso fine. Si ricordi il dialogo tra Virgilio, il perfetto pagano, e Catone, che è salvo per la misericordia imperscrutabile di Cristo. Per la prima volta il maestro die Dante, rivolgendosi al vecchio custode nel nome della donna che questi amò in terra, sbaglia. Catone lo ascolta e lo riprende:

"Marzia piacque tanto a li occhi miei
mentr' i' fu' di là—diss'elli allora—
che quante grazie volse da me, fei.
Or che di là dal mal fume dimora,
più muover non mi può, per quella legge
che fatta fu quando me n' uscì fòra.
Ma se donna del ciel ti move e regge,
come tu di', non è mestier lusinghe:
bastisi ben che per lei mi richegge."

(I, 85-93)

Gli amori terrestri, per quanto nobili, non trovano dunque eco nelle anime sante. Esse sono tutte protese verso la vita dell'amore celeste. Ma alla vita celeste non si innalzano senza aver compiuto un atto di sottomissione a Dio. Dante stesso viene recinto con un docile giunco, "l'umile pianta" sotto il cui simbolo si avvera ogni mistero del *Purgatorio*.

"Questa isoletta intorno ad imo ad imo
là giù colà dove la batte l'onda,
porta de' giunchi sovra 'l molle limo.
Null' altra pianta che facesse fronda
o indurasse, vi puote aver vita,
però ch' a le percosse non seconda."

(I, 100-05)

L'umiltà di Dante si modifica e si perfeziona nei vari episodi della struttura verticale che abbiamo segnalata, per ricevere da Virgilio il suo ultimo sigillo:

"Non aspettar mio dir più né mio cenno:
libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,
e fallo fòra non fare a suo senno:
perch' io te sovra te corono e mitrio."

(XXVII, 139-42)

Comunque si possa intendere la splendida decorazione della corona e della mitria, sull'ultimo gradino della *scala Dei* (XXI, 21) il libero arbitrio non coincide con la facoltà di cui gli uomini fanno uso in terra per scegliere tra il bene e il male. Il purgatorio è infatti il regno ultraterreno

"dove poter peccar non è più nostro."

(XXIV, 132)

Al vertice del sacro monte l'arbitrio libero dritto e sano di Dante coincide con quella

"libera volontà di miglior soglia,"

(XXI, 69)

che le anime esperimentano in sé al loro uscire di purgazione. Ad esse che stanno per varcare la porta del paradiso, libera volontà significa processo di liberazione dalle volizioni soggettive e accoglimento della volontà assoluta di Dio (XXI, 61-66). Questa ubbidienza, detta anche umiltà, viene esaltata nella prima preghiera del purgatorio:

"Come del suo voler li angeli tuoi
fan sacrificio a te, cantando osanna,
così faccian li uomini de' suoi."

(XI, 10-12)

Le strutture orizzontali corrispondenti ai sette balzi, rappresentano altre sette grandi variazioni di quest'unico tema. Dante è un maestro inesauribile di variazioni. Si pensi a quante volte nell'*Inferno* e nel *Purgatorio* egli varia uno stesso soggetto, quando in ogni cerchio e in ogni balzo mette il suo corpo opaco e grave al confronto di corpi impalpabili, o narra e rinarrà il prodigo che lo ha condotto nei regni dell'oltretomba. Si pensi alle variazioni sulla luce nel *Paradiso*. Le variazioni sul tema dell'umiltà nascono all'innesto di questa duttile virtù in figure che conservano il carattere della loro individualità. Nel modellare l'una dopo l'altra le anime sante, la mano di Dante ne trasforma i residui terreni e le memorie in segni viventi che conferiscono all'umiltà altrettanti aspetti unici in se stessi. Oderisi da Gubbio e Rinieri di Calboli, Adriano V e Ugo Capeto, Forese Donati e Guido Guinizelli esistono nell'umiltà e le esprimono con parole e atti, attraverso i quali si manifesta la presenza indelebile delle loro persone.

Facendo dell'umiltà la sostanza del purgatorio, Dante si è attenuto a un motivo così ovvio, che non c'è bisogno di ulteriori commenti. Di fronte alla semplicità della dottrina sta la ricchezza delle figurazioni nelle quali essa si specifica e si individua, fino a creare un proprio mondo di valori morali ed emozionali.

Noi abbiamo cercato di adeguarci allo stile nel quale si specchia la vita del sacro monte. Da tutte le inquadrature che sono passate davanti a noi, emergono certi elementi e certe simmetrie. Il modo in cui le anime sante sono disposte richiama le figure e i tabernacoli delle cattedrali gotiche, o anche le tavole da altare dei pittori toscani. D'altronde l'inquadratura del VII balzo, che è tutta movimento, gesto e cadenza, richiama più da vicino una funzione liturgica.

Ma simili raccostamenti, che implicano l'affinità del gusto figurativo nelle arti del medioevo, restano inadeguati alla poesia della *Commedia*. Dante non lavora con la pietra né col colore, ma con quella materia evanescente che è la parola. Egli si approprià di ogni possibilità che la parola gli offre, alternando al *sermo sublimis* gli effetti più aspri e più chiocci del *sermo humilis*, secondo quell'esigenza cristiana che il compianto Auerbach ha messo in rilievo. Ma ciò non basta ancora. Le strutture del *Purgatorio* presuppongono una scuola speciale, la raffinata scuola della ballata e della canzone. Si rifletta a come è costruita una ballata, con il suo ritornello che viene dalla liturgia, e a come è costruita la stanza di una canzone, con i suoi elementi estrosi e ordinati, con le sue complesse partizioni che si equilibrano e si rispondono. Attraverso queste forme, a cui si associano musica, danza e canto, si erano andati sviluppando gli schemi della cadenzata architettura poetica, alla quale Dante, come si sa dal *De vulgar eloquentia*, educò il suo gusto e la sua arte, prima di metter mano alle composizioni della *Divina Commedia*.

HENRI DE CAMPION: ASPECTS OF AN INNER CONFLICT

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A PESSIMIST might reflect that for every old manuscript unearthed many more can be presumed irretrievable. He might add that even those ultimately reaching print do so only after a variety of extraneous factors have altered the texts' very substance. Social upheavals, neglect, the wanton acts of individuals, may have contrived to hamper a fair appraisal of a work's original merits, having created a situation in which it even becomes hazardous to shift the entire responsibility for the volume to the alleged author.

The *Mémoires* of Henri de Campion (1613-63) are a case in point. The original autograph text has disappeared altogether. Only in 1807, a hundred and forty-four years after the writer's death, was the work published for the first time by one general Grimoard. The editor unfortunately took it upon himself to delete many passages dealing with Campion's private life and thoughts, thereby compounding the changes already brought about by the "corrections" and "additions" of an earlier reader of the manuscript, the Abbé de Garambourg. Grimoard's expurgated text alone survived the next fifty years; it was then re-edited in the "Bibliothèque elzévirienne" by Célestin Moreau.¹

In its present form the book is mainly the military account of a professional soldier. Campion served in Lorraine, Franche-Comté, and Picardy, under such distinguished commanders as La Force, La Valette, Weimar, Longueville, Schomberg, and d'Harcourt. During the Fronde he sided with the rebels. Like his brother Alexandre de Campion, the friend of Corneille, he moved in the orbit of the Duc de Longueville, Condé's brother-in-law; his principal loyalty, however, rested with the insurgent Duc de Beaufort.² This relationship accounts for much of the historical interest of Campion's memoirs. Many politically prominent figures of the period are known largely through the accounts of authors who frequented their intimate circle: thus

1. *Mémoires de Henri de Campion*. Nouvelle édition, suivie d'un choix de lettres d'Alexandre de Campion, avec des notes par M. C. Moreau (Paris: P. Jannet), 1857. All quotations from the *Mémoires* are in this edition.

2. For biographical data see the *Mémoires* themselves, as well as i.a. Moreau's "Préface" to the work, Ch. de Grandjean's article "Campion, Henri de" in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, XVIII, 1139-40, and the one by L. Letellier in *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: XVI^e-XVII^e Siècle*, ed. G. Grete (Paris: A. Fayard, 1954), p. 222. The Letellier article erroneously has "Grinsard" for "Grimoard." Most of the data in the present paper are found in my Columbia doctoral dissertation, "Memoirs of the Fronde: A Literary Study" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1957), notably pp. 107 ff.

Beaufort had Campion somewhat as La Rochefoucauld had Gourville, as Condé had Lenet, and as Retz had Joly; Madame de Motteville was close to Anne d'Autriche, as Goulas was to Gaston d'Orléans, as Daniel de Cosnac was to the Prince de Conti. The historical importance of Campion's testimony is related to the particular significance of the rebellious activities of Beaufort who, after all, heralded, so to speak, the troubles of the Fronde five years before civil war actually broke out. Shortly after Mazarin's rise to power at the beginning of the Regency, Beaufort headed the "Cabale des Importants," which was smashed in 1643 after rumors that the conspiring nobles had plotted to assassinate the Cardinal. Did such a plot really exist? Retz stated flatly that he did not believe it: "Ce qui a fait que je ne l'ai jamais cru, est que l'on n'en a jamais vu ni déposition ni indice."³ La Rochefoucauld professed ignorance as to the conspiracy's actual nature, but nevertheless tended to minimize the gravity of Beaufort's intentions.⁴ Madame de Motteville implied that Mazarin's suspicions might have been justified, but she carefully refrained from expressing an affirmative opinion.⁵ Campion's *Mémoires*, however, leave no doubt as to the plot's murderous intent; Victor Cousin has pointed out that, aside from some corroborating contemporary correspondence, they embody the main proof of the conspiracy's historical reality.⁶

There is much, however, to attract the reader of literature as well as the historian in Campion's book. That this should be so, in spite of the early editors' arbitrary deletions, is somewhat of a miracle. In his preface (p. xii), Moreau indicated how Grimoard—who, it should be noted, was merely following a then prevailing editorial custom—felt no compunction about arbitrarily trimming the account of what he considered "détails généalogiques ou d'affaires domestiques insusceptibles d'amuser ou d'intéresser, de longues tirades dévotées, des prières ou oraisons qui passeroient pour capucinades." The features censured thus related to highly personal aspects of an affective and psychological nature, information that would have afforded valuable glimpses into the author's inner life. There remains enough evidence in the mutilated text to indicate that this interior existence was exceptionally original. The author's sensitive perception of his surroundings acquires heightened interest for the reader by dint of the particular process through which Campion renders the perceived data. Especially prominent in this respect is the puzzling contrast which the *Mémoires* reveal between the author's temperament and resulting philosophy on one hand, and his outward existence on the other. What is more, within Campion

3. Cardinal de Retz, *Mémoires*, ed. by Maurice Allem (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 47. ("Bibliothèque de la Pléiade").

4. La Rochefoucauld, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by L. Martin-Chauffier (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 75. ("Bibliothèque de la Pléiade").

5. Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*, ed. by Michaud and Poujoulat (Paris: Chez l'édition du Commentaire analytique du Code civil, 1838), 2ème série, X, 59.

6. See Moreau's edition of Campion's memoirs, p. 174, n. and p. 195, n.

himself opposing tendencies created problems of a moral and speculative kind clearly transcending the bounds of a mere historical document. The work may thus be viewed also as reflecting an uncompromisingly honest search for a valid synthesis. And while students of the period may wish primarily to situate the author's reactions within the broader context of contemporary attitudes, others (philosophers, perhaps, if not plain devotees of literature) may find themselves attracted more to those aspects of Campion's work raising questions that possess universal and timeless implications.

From either view, the curious incompatibility between Campion's career —his energetic pursuit of military tasks—and his self-described pacific turn of mind, cannot fail to strike even a casual observer. This man of action was at heart a gentle introvert, attached to his family and with a leaning toward the contemplative life. Books were important to him from his early youth; his preferences in this respect are significant: "J'avoue même que je dois tout ce que j'ai jamais eu de bons sentimens à cet excellent auteur [Plutarch], lequel est selon moi, le seul qui peut nous apprendre à bien vivre, comme Montaigne à nous bien connaître et Sénèque à bien mourir" (pp. 5-6).

This disciple of Seneca and Montaigne ("qui sont toujours mes véritables favoris") always retained the philosopher's moderation and the humanist's faculty to stop and analyze. He was not swallowed up by the turmoil around him, but, at the same time, he accepted the life of violent action which was that of his time and particularly of his caste. His attitude toward duels, which were so much a part of that caste's code of honor, provides a typical illustration of this dichotomy. Campion, by his own account, did not refuse his share of such contests, but he made his dislike for them abundantly clear. Relating early in his work how he fought victoriously against a gentleman named Malicorne, he went on to remark: "Il m'est arrivé avant et depuis plusieurs de ces sortes d'affaires dont je ne parlerai plus, ayant présentement trop d'aversion pour ce faux point d'honneur pour en vouloir raconter les succès" (pp. 70-71).

The author, unlike Molière's Alceste, was not ready to go to war against prevailing concepts of social behavior. He was forever striving to strike a middle course between two polarities: his own temperament and the values of the outside world. His unswerving loyalty to the Duc de Beaufort is highly significant in this respect. Nicknamed "le roi des halles,"⁷ this turbulent son of the Duc de Vendôme was a colorful figure abundantly portrayed in the memoir literature of the Fronde. Not much good has been said of

7. "Il formoit un certain jargon de mots populaires si mal placés, que cela le rendoit ridicule à tout le monde [...] ce qui donna lieu de dire, pour l'excuser de ce qu'il parloit avec tant de dérangement et si grossièrement, qu'il falloit bien qu'un roi parlât la langue de ses sujets; car son grand pouvoir parmi le peuple lui avoit acquis le titre de roi des halles." (Duchesse de Nemours, *Mémoires*, ed. Michaud and Poujoulat [Paris: Chez l'éditeur du Commentaire analytique du Code civil, 1838], 2ème série, IX, 617).

him, however. La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Motteville, Retz ("M. de Beaufort, qui avait le sens beaucoup au-dessous du médiocre"), Tallemant des Réaux, to name but a few of the better-known contemporaries, attested to his faults or at least his limitations.⁸ Campion fully corroborated such opinion: the Duke, he testified, was a man "dont l'esprit n'est pas capable de soutenir une bonne fortune, et encore moins de l'établir" (p. 168). Why then his repeated protests of attachment to this Prince? Was it insincerity? Quite to the contrary. Having pledged his loyalty, Campion thought himself honor-bound to serve and assist the Duke, even—as actually happened—if these faithful activities were to bring about his banishment from France. His personal opinion of Beaufort as an individual could not be allowed to interfere, under the terms of the code, with his duty as a soldier and a gentleman. Thus Campion felt compelled to stand by the Duke and the other "Importants" even when they were planning to assassinate Mazarin: "j'étois résolu d'en souffrir l'exécution plutôt que de trahir un Prince qui avoit une entière confiance en moi" (p. 183). At the same time his abhorrence for the murderous scheme caused him to request that he not be the one designated actually to strike the Cardinal, "puisque je me tuerois plutôt moi-même que de faire une action de cette nature" (p. 178). The inner conflict arising from such simultaneous dedication to opposing moral values is little short of tragic—indeed Cornelian, if one wishes to establish this link with a well-known aspect of the period's emotional climate.

However, without trying to impose other centuries' categories on Campion's reactions, we may recognize in him characteristics which are timelessly and universally human rather than bound up with a unique political-historical background. Much in this author would thwart from the outset any attempt to label him as "typical" in a narrowly circumscribed way. He belongs no more to the swashbuckling Louis XIII literary spirit—the one sometimes dubbed "baroque," perhaps for lack of a better term—than to the more restrained post-1660 "classical" one. He dissociated himself from the former through his marked coolness towards heroics and romantic feats of *galanterie*; he deviated from the latter, on the other hand, notably with respect to his insistence on his love for a young daughter and his endless grief when she died at the age of four. Editors' deletions of personalia notwithstanding, little Louise-Anne figures prominently in her father's memoirs: "Je passai le temps chez moi avec une grande douceur, avec ma femme et mes voisins, avec qui j'ai toujours été bien, m'occupant une partie du temps à la lecture, ou à jouer avec ma

8. La Rochefoucauld, op. cit., pp. 62 ff.; Madame de Motteville, op. cit., p. 52; Retz, op. cit., p. 45. Tallemant illustrated the occasional inanity of the Duke's conversation: once when Madame de Longueville expressed her dislike for spiders, and another lady voiced hers regarding beetles, Beaufort, with earnest irrelevance, announced: "Et moy, je ne hais rien tant que les mauvaises actions." (*Les Historiettes*, ed. G. Mongrédién [Paris: Garnier, 1932-34], V, 153, n.)

fille, qui malgré son bas âge, étoit si divertissante, que ceux qui la voyoient y prenoient un plaisir extrême, et moi plus que tous ensemble" (p. 246).⁹

Judging from his anticipation of criticism, Campion was aware that such display of affection for small children was not quite in keeping with the prevailing literary trend:¹⁰ "Je ne parlerois pas de ces choses, que beaucoup trouveront indignes d'être écrites, si la perte que j'en ai faite depuis, et dont j'ai pensé mourir de déplaisir, ne me faisoit chercher cette consolation que l'on ne me doit point envier. Si l'on croit que c'est par innocence que j'ai des sentimens si tendres, peut-être me fait-on tort." Interestingly, though, he made no apologies for not conforming: "mais je cherche si peu à présent l'approbation générale, que je ne me donnerai pas la peine d'ôter cette impression à ceux qui la voudront prendre, et je ne laisserai pas de parler à ma mode de ce que j'ai eu et j'aurai toujours de plus cher."

The chasm between outer and inner reality appears here in clear outline. Campion, who dutifully fought duels which he despised, who faithfully served Beaufort whom he did not admire, who was one of the plotters in a murderous conspiracy that revolted him, did not do so in order to placate public opinion. His was not a conflict merely of his convictions versus accepted patterns of behavior, but an individual struggle to reconcile both entities within himself. There was no hesitancy on his part, indeed, to obey the dictates of his own conclusions in such instances where they might have led him to act at variance with socially approved moral standards. His genuine concern for truth asserted itself repeatedly in this connection, which proves (if such proof was ever needed) that all of the period's memoir literature cannot be summarily described as a mass of apologetic writings. At times this trait lends charming candor to the work:

... mais puisque je fais ici une espèce de confession générale, je ne puis m'empêcher d'avouer que si d'un côté mes mœurs ont été assez bonnes selon la morale, en ce que j'ai toujours regardé l'équité comme le point essentiel selon lequel l'homme doit se gouverner, et que j'ai été l'ennemi déclaré du vice, de l'autre je me suis trouvé plus enclin que personne à l'amour, avec cette circonstance assez extraordinaire que, bien qu'en l'absence des femmes qui me l'ont inspiré j'aie souhaité leurs

9. See also his remarks when he recalls the girl's birth: "Je retournai à Rouen, où je passai encore trois mois, parce que ma femme y accoucha le 2 de mai [1649] de son premier enfant, qui fut une fille appelée Louise-Anne, si belle et si agréable que dès le moment de sa naissance je l'aimai avec une tendresse que je ne puis exprimer" (p. 243). His despair at the child's death never left him: "[mon affliction] fut telle, que je n'ai pas eu depuis de véritable joie. Je m'étais si bien mis en l'esprit que ma fille seroit la consolation de mes dernières années, et j'avois si bien commencé à l'associer à toutes choses avec moi, que je crois que c'est lui voler son bien que de prendre plaisir à quelque chose sans elle" (p. 262).

10. See Roland Mousnier, "Etude sur la population de la France au XVII^e siècle," *XVII^e Siècle*, 16 (1952), 533: "L'enfant, en tant que tel, ne compte pas. L'état d'enfance est considéré comme un état de faiblesse et de déraison, méprisé." While this observation is probably essentially of sociological import, and possibly a rather broad generalization, it is true nevertheless that lyricism on the subject of small children is hardly a popular literary topic in the second half of the century.

dernières faveurs, je me suis trouvé tout autre avec elles, et la timidité qui m'a dominé, et quelquefois aussi les réflexions, m'ont fait éviter jusqu'à présent de les presser de m'accorder ce qu'elles n'auraient pu avouer sans honte. Que ceux qui liront ceci se moquent de moi s'ils veulent, mais voilà la vérité sur cet article, en quoi je suis persuadé que peu d'hommes voudront m'imiter. (pp. 8-9).

Admitting to no feminine conquests, Campion did not seek to impress the *libertins*; failing to invoke a religious motivation for his conduct, he deprived himself also of the unqualified approval of the faithful. Yet he can be considered as belonging to either rather than to neither tradition. That he was pious can be ascertained from Grimoard's report that the memoirs originally included "de longues tirades dévotes." The sincerity in evidence throughout the work rules out the hypothesis that such passages could have been penned in the absence of a true conviction. Thus, when the early death of Louis XIII is attributed by Campion to the fact that "la justice divine voulut retrancher les jours de celui qui avoit persécuté sa mère jusqu'à la mort" (p. 166), it can be assumed that the author is expressing genuinely religious feelings. None the less, this Christian looked to the pagan Seneca for the art of "bien mourir." When stricken by the loss of his beloved child, he found little solace in the teachings of his faith. Campion does not say this; in fact, he asserts the reverse: "chérir toujours ce que j'ai le plus aimé, y penser continuellement en éprouvant le désir de m'y rejoindre, je crois que c'est le sentiment d'un homme qui sait aimer, et qui, ayant une ferme croyance de l'immortalité de l'âme, pense que l'éloignement de sa chère fille est une absence pour un temps, et non une séparation éternelle" (pp. 262-63). One might have thought, on the contrary, that a firm belief in a reunion in afterlife, joined to a submissive acceptance of divine decrees, would alleviate a mourner's affliction rather than precipitate him into even deeper despair. The *non sequitur* in this case stems very probably from at least partly unconscious efforts by Campion to fit his despondency within the salutary confines of religious doctrine. His inability to do so to his true satisfaction could but add to his unhappiness.

For it was only at the cost of his *joie de vivre* that Campion could thus strive for a precarious equilibrium between mutually exclusive attitudes. At times his inadequacy in solving what loomed as insoluble led him to reject outright the validity of absolute criteria: "Les choses ne font effet sur nous que selon les sentiments que nous en avons; . . . il n'en faut pas juger généralement comme si nous avions tous la même pensée" (p. 262). From such insistence on the subjectivity of experience there is but a short step to considerations regarding the relative nature of virtue: "Il faut savoir le prix que nous estimons les choses, avant que de louer notre patience quand nous les perdons." This comes remarkably close to La Rochefoucauld: "Les biens et les maux qui nous arrivent ne nous touchent pas selon leur grandeur, mais selon notre sensibilité" (*Maximes posthumes*, no. 528). It is not the only time that this reader of Seneca and Montaigne hewed

closely to the deterministic philosophy of La Rochefoucauld—too closely, perhaps, not to create another point of divergence from the religious orthodoxy professed elsewhere. Did we not see that Campion credited to timidity much of his irreproachable behavior toward women? "Si nous résistons à nos passions," La Rochefoucauld submitted for his part (*Maximes*, no. 122), "c'est plus par leur faiblesse que par notre force."¹¹

The passing of years seems to have impressed Henri de Campion with an increasing awareness of futility. The *ambition* which reportedly marked his early years left him at the age of forty (p. 9); he attributed his dejection mainly to his little daughter's passing: "Je ne songeais plus qu'à mener une vie sombre et retirée" (p. 263). He lost all desire to live after his wife's death in 1659. The memoirs end on a most gloomy note, the author's concern centering on his own death and tombstone. "On voit que l'affliction qui consumoit M. de Campion lui rendoit la vie insupportable," comments general Grimoard (p. 279, n.). "Il mourut d'une maladie de langueur le 11 mai 1663, âgé de cinquante ans et trois mois." The blows that saddened his private life and which no doubt aggravated his melancholy disposition were not, in all probability, solely responsible for Campion's moroseness, however.¹² Torn inwardly also by his unsuccessful efforts to reconcile the outer world with his inner life, and further divided between opposing tendencies within his own set of accepted values, the disheartened memoirist undoubtedly was led along these paths ultimately to view death as the logical, if not the desirable, outcome of an existence both painful and without meaning.

In this sense the quest of Henri de Campion is ageless. Not just as modern as to-day, but indeed as old as antiquity is the individual who stands in alienation from surrounding society, who ponders relentlessly over the causes and possible implications of the problem, who strives valiantly and with dignity to assume his full share of responsibility as a human being—even at the cost of going through a series of motions. It is to the humanist strain of sensitive thinkers who raise these eternal questions again and again that Campion undoubtedly belongs. That he did not succeed in coming forth with a satisfactory solution cannot detract from the value of his search: his *Mémoires* continue to stand as a sincere and frequently moving attempt to find answers which, perhaps, do not exist.

11. We might remember in passing that Campion died in 1663, at least a year before copies of the *Maximes* had begun to circulate; he could not, therefore, have derived his inspiration as a *moraliste* from that great model.

12. While the loss of a wife and child constitutes a most grievous occurrence in the average man's life, it does not normally lead to such utter and lasting despondency. Campion's longing for death may have been heightened by his self-reported feelings of guilt (*supra*, n. 9) were he to enjoy anything of this life after his daughter's demise; a particularly extreme reaction, especially since he had six other children, four of whom were alive in 1660 when he ended his memoirs (p. 278).

"PORTRAITS" IN *LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE*

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A RECENT article of M. André Maurois in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* (November 1, 1956) reopens a perennial question: can a character from a novel be the portrait of a real person? The answer is no. Some trait in a real person may give the "choc léger, mystérieux" which sets the inventive process in motion. But it is only a center of attraction around which a host of electrons cluster. A character once conceived begins to live his or her own life and leaves the original far behind. M. Maurois quotes Marcel Proust: "Il n'a aucune clef. Un livre est un grand cimetière où, sur la plupart des tombes, on ne peut plus lire les noms effacés." But this has never deterred inquisitive people from trying to decipher the obliterated names, whatever authors may say. The *Comédie humaine* is a Père-Lachaise in itself, much frequented by the curious. It was so even in Balzac's own lifetime and, like Proust and Maurois, he recorded his protest. "Je n'ai jamais portraité qui que ce soit que j'eusse connu," he wrote to Mme Hanska in April 1843.¹ The word "portraité" is probably her creation, but he adopts it, either to humour or to tease her. We have a similar testimony from George Sand, given in a letter which she wrote to Balzac three years earlier: "Je suis trop habitué à faire des romans pour ne pas savoir qu'on ne fait jamais un portrait, qu'on ne peut ni ne veut copier un modèle vivant. Où serait l'art, grands dieux! si l'on n'inventait pas, soit en beau, soit en laid, les trois quarts des personnages où le public, bête et curieux, veut reconnaître des originaux à eux connus."² Unfortunately, in both cases this affirmation is promptly weakened by what follows. The sentence from Balzac's letter continues thus: "excepté Gustave Planche dans Claude Vignon, de son consentement, et George Sand dans Camille Maupin, également de son consentement." Camille Maupin is the pen-name, in Balzac's novel *Béatrix, ou Les Amours forcés* (1839-45) of the inspired poetess and novelist Félicité des Touches. Claude Vignon is the distinguished critic who for some time has been her lover. George Sand's letter also proceeds with a reference to *Béatrix*. She knew perfectly well that Balzac had taken from her the subject of this novel—the uneasy *amours* of the famous pianist Franz Liszt and the Countess Marie d'Agoult, later to become herself a writer under the pen-name of "Daniel Stern." Sand

1. *Lettres à l'Etrangère* (henceforth LE), II, 141.

2. Letter from the Collection Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, quoted by André Maurois, *Lélia, ou La Vie de George Sand*, p. 293; also by Jacques Vier, "Comment Balzac composait un roman: L'Affaire Béatrix," *L'Ecole*, February 5, 1955.

had given Balzac her version of this liaison at Nohant in March 1838. And so her letter goes on to ask Balzac to exonerate her if she is accused of "une délation malveillante" in providing the material for this novel whose first title was to have been *Les Galériens de l'amour*. What remains of the lofty esthetic principle?

In the course of his correspondence with "L'Etrangère," Balzac is far from consistent in maintaining this principle. In the same letter of 1843, he also asserts that he has never used his own emotional experiences with her as material for fiction; but he immediately admits an exception—a letter in *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* expressing the same sort of jealousy as often animated Mme Hanska herself when she suspected that she was not enjoying Balzac's undivided allegiance. There are other exceptions. Mme Hanska herself, or more accurately perhaps the spectre of her vigilance, frequently obtrudes in the *Comédie humaine*. Her shadow lurks behind the Natalie de Manerville of *Le Lys dans la vallée* inquiring into the nature of the love-affair between Félix de Vandenesse and Mme de Mortsauf, an idealized presentation of the love-affair between Balzac and "la Dilecta," Mme de Berny. In *Albert Savarus*, her figure looms behind the Duchesse d'Argaïolo, "l'ange des exécutions, l'ange inflexible," uncompromising in her exacting of absolute fidelity on the part of her worshipper, Savarus-Balzac. And not long after the letter quoted, Mme Hanska herself provided Balzac with the subject of *Modeste Mignon*: the story of a romantic pen-friendship ending in matrimony. "Jamais je n'ai exprimé quoi que ce soit de mon cœur. C'eût été un infâme sacrilège!" avers our novelist. But what of "la Dilecta"—as Mme de Beauséant in *La Femme abandonnée*, as the maternally platonic Mme de Mortsauf in *Le Lys*?³ What of the Marquise de Castries as the unyielding coquette in the "Confession inédite" of *Le Médecin de campagne* and in *La Duchesse de Langeais*? Points of departure no doubt, metamorphosed, transmuted into independent creatures having a background, a personality and a life of their own? Yet there is more than a little of Balzac's *cœur* in all this.

But let us confine ourselves to the question of the portrayal, in the *Comédie humaine*, of real people with whom Balzac was not, or with whom he was less emotionally entangled. Several passages in the *Lettres à l'Etrangère* contradict the assertion "Je n'ai jamais portraité qui que ce soit que j'eusse connu." One of them refers to the "blanche sirène" of *Le Lys dans la Vallée*, Lady Arabelle Dudley (*LE*, I, 538; May 15, 1840). Balzac expresses satisfaction in having hit off in her the typical emancipated Englishwoman, born of a cold and puritanical race which ranks respectability as the cardinal virtue but which, when it kicks over the traces, does so *con brio*. Lady Dudley undertakes the conquest of the goody-goody Félix de Vandenesse for the sheer pleasure of snatching him from his allegiance to the too angelic Henriette de Mortsauf, flings herself at his head,

3. "La céleste créature dont Mme de Mortsauf est une pâle épreuve" (*LE*, I, 344).

smothers his remorse with sensual delights, flaunts her ascendancy over him under the very nose of Mme de Mortsauf, and then thrusts him aside with a sudden and insolent brutality. The model for Arabelle Dudley is generally taken to be the entrancing Jane Digby, Lady Ellenborough, that votaress of passion for whom Sir Harold Nicholson invented the ingenious phrase: "in no sense a promiscuous woman, but one who dealt in successive fidelities." One of these "fidelities" was her elopement in 1829-30 with Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, of which the scandal-raising affair between Lady Dudley and Félix de Vandenesse appears to be a reflection.

So vividly does *Le Lys dans la vallée* seem to seize upon salient features in Lady Ellenborough's character and temperament that her Anglo-Saxon biographers, beginning with E. M. Oddie,⁴ have tried to establish the legend, in my opinion spurious, that Balzac enjoyed her favours in 1830 or 1831. Many years later we certainly do find Mme Hanska trying to scent out an erstwhile rival in Lady Ellenborough, but probably in relation to the year 1835; she covered two pages of a letter to Balzac with her recriminations. In this connection, two out of the three allusions to Lady Ellenborough in the *Lettres à l'Etrangère* are of interest. One is of 1840, the other of 1843 (*LE*, I, 538; May 15, 1840 and II, 141; April 23, 1843). In the first, Balzac admitted that he had called on Lady Ellenborough, or rather on the Baroness von Venningen, as she was by then, at her home near Heidelberg—this must have been in May 1835 on his way to Vienna—but he stated that the call had had no other effect than to awaken his inventive faculties. He had been kept waiting in the castle gardens for two hours while an admirer, Prince Schönburg, had paid court to her. He had drawn profit from this experience: "Jamais je n'ai si bien vu que j'avais, dans *Le Lys*, très bien expliqué les femmes de ce pays [England] en peu de mots. Ce que j'ai deviné de Lady Ellenborough en deux heures que je me suis promené dans son parc [...] et pendant le dîner, est la vérité même." And so we have a virtual affirmation that Lady Dudley was modelled on Lady Ellenborough. There is some mystery about his motives for visiting her, but one of them must surely have been to bring his penetrating scrutiny to bear on a woman whom he had already decided to generalize into a type.

In the second of these letters, that in which he dealt with Mme Hanska's reproaches of 1843, he again referred to this visit and gave other details, lengthening to five hours the period during which he had kicked his heels in the garden, and proving his complete detachment of mind by relating how profitably he had spent the time sketching out the supplementary "Pensées" for *Louis Lambert*. Confirmation of this detail exists among his papers, but the whole affair is somewhat obscure—I hope to clear it up on some future occasion—and it is complicated by the fact that, whenever Balzac was hard-pressed through Mme Hanska's jealous suspicions, exact

4. *Portrait of Ianthe* (1933). Others are Lesley Blanch, *The Wilder Shores of Love* (1954), and Irving Wallace, *The Fabulous Originals* (1956).

truth had to bow to the needs of the moment. But there are good grounds for accepting his account as substantially true. For the creation of Lady Dudley, what he had previously gleaned from hearsay and current gossip about Lady Ellinborough, and what he saw of her during his brief visit to Weinheim, provided sufficient factual material. Inventive genius did the rest. An amusing result is that the biographers of "Ianthe" use *Le Lys dans la vallée* as if it were a source-book. No greater tribute, though it is unconscious, could be paid to his ability to fuse fact and fiction in the interests of that superior reality which is a great novelist's concern.

Mme Hanska was suspicious, too, about another Englishwoman, the beautiful Sarah Frances Lowell, Countess Guidoboni Visconti of the ash-blond hair—and with much better cause. That is one reason why, in 1836 (*LE*, I, 351; October 1836), he had denied having portrayed her in the person of Mme de Mortsauf—a reasonable denial, but weakened by the questionable assertion that he had not yet met Sarah when he was working on *Le Lys*. There are firmer grounds for supposing that Sarah, to whom *Béatrix* was dedicated, lent some features to the Irish-born Fanny O'Brien, Baronne du Guénic, in that novel. Mme Hanska's jealousy is also no doubt the reason for a strange statement he made much later about *La Cousine Bette*. According to a letter of 1846 (*LE*, III, 281; June 28, 1846), the terrible "poor relation" of that story was a compound of three persons: his own mother; Rosalie Rzewuska, Mme Hanska's aunt by marriage; and the poetess Marceline Desbordes-Valmore. Balzac's motives for this are not hard to divine. He was cross with his mother, and exasperated by Aunt Rosalie's hostility to him. As for the gentle and melancholy Desbordes-Valmore, she was a friend of Mme de Brugnol, Balzac's house-keeper, and a frequent visitor to the house in the Rue Basse. She was therefore suspect to Mme Hanska, and had to be written off as a horrible and malevolent person.

However, most of Balzac's avowals about living models are concerned with characters appearing in such novels as *Béatrix*, *Illusions perdues* and *La Muse du département*; but especially *Béatrix*. Let us, then, return to that novel. The subject of *Béatrix* (the first two parts of 1839) is a pentagonal love intrigue between the great authoress Félicité des Touches, the critic Claude Vignon, a former lover of hers, Calyste du Guénic, an ingenuous young Breton noble, Béatrix de Rochefide, Mlle des Touches' bosom friend and enemy, and the musician Gennaro Conti, a man with whom Béatrix has been living for about two years. About this novel, we have the following candid admission of February 1840: "Oui, mademoiselle des Touches est George Sand; oui, Béatrix est trop bien madame d'Agoult. George Sand en est au comble de la joie; elle prend là une petite vengeance sur son amie. Sauf quelques variantes, l'*histoire est vraie*" (*LE*, I, 527). If Béatrix de Rochefide is Marie d'Agoult, then it would seem to follow that Gennaro Conti is Franz Liszt. But in May 1843, when Balzac suggested that Liszt,

with whom he was then still friendly, should call on Mme Hanska at St. Petersburg, he chose to disavow any such identification. He did so in the following terms: "Hélas! je n'ai jamais pu lui dire que *Conti* c'est Sandeau en musicien, comme *Lousteau* est encore Sandeau. On ne s'excuse pas ainsi, vous comprenez" (*LE*, II, 160; May 15, 1843). These two passages seem then to sanction the following identifications:

Félicité des Touches (or Camille Maupin)	= George Sand.
Béatrix de Rochefide	= Marie d'Agoult.
Conti	= Jules Sandeau.

And we know that Gustave Planche, who had, somewhat officiously, fought a duel on Sand's behalf in 1833, = Claude Vignon.

Let us recall the gist of *Béatrix*. Calyste du Guénic becomes enamoured of Félicité des Touches. The latter, aware of the disparity of age between them, and knowing that her "friend" Béatrix de Rochefide is coming to stay with her at Guérande, decides to steer Calyste towards her. She sets about it in a curious way, by giving Calyste, as George Sand had undoubtedly given Balzac, a verbal portrait of Béatrix which is not only unflattering but noticeably feline. She tells him how Béatrix, anxious to draw attention to herself, and having failed to gain glory as a salon hostess, had created a sensation by running off with Conti, that vain, second-rate singer and composer; not for love, but for the sake of self-advertisement. The pair have gone off to Italy together, and Béatrix's letters to Félicité from that country involuntarily reveal that their liaison has become the sort of penal servitude indicated in the original title of the novel. In fact only worldly considerations still hold them together: Béatrix's feeling that the sole justification in the eyes of society for a "grande faute" is its consistency; and Conti's reluctance to figure as a discarded lover. It goes without saying that this is by no means a faithful transcription of the liaison of Marie d'Agoult with Franz Liszt, but it is recognizable as being based upon it. Béatrix arrives at Guérande, Calyste falls madly in love with her, but Béatrix's sole concern is to command his adoration without requiting him for it. Félicité quarrels with her over her insincerity. Conti reappears and reclaims Béatrix, Félicité retires into a convent, makes over a large amount of her wealth to Calyste, and marries him off to an eligible ingénue. That is as far as the 1839 installment of the novel goes.

"Sauf quelques variantes, *l'histoire est vraie*." In actual fact, the "variantes" are important. Primed by George Sand, who probably would not have objected to winning Liszt from Marie, Balzac has made of Béatrix a fairly despicable creature—"froide, pâle, dure et mince [...] rongée de vanité [...] nature fausse et trompeuse." Marie d'Agoult has come off badly. On the other hand, George Sand is written up well in the person of Félicité. A literary and musical genius, she stands high above her fellow-creatures by virtue of her intellectual and moral superiority; she is mag-

nanimous and capable of the most generous self-effacement. Gustave Planche as Claude Vignon is not so handsomely treated, whether he had consented or not to being "portraité." Vignon is an "écrivain dédaigneux et superbe" who has failed to develop creative genius and turned into an arid and destructive critic. He is supine, lazy, slovenly and disillusioned. In *Béatrix* he has the role of a chilling but clear-sighted observer. He is to figure again in the second part of *Illusions perdues* as a sort of Alceste among his fellow-critics. In still later novels he is to take on some of the characteristics of Eugène Lherminier and get on quite respectably in the academic world.⁵ The best one can say of Balzac's portrait of Planche as Vignon is that it is not nearly so damning as the one Philarète Chasles was to give of him in his *Mémoires*.

And what of the Cennaro Conti—Jules Sandeau relationship? Jules Sandeau and George Sand, both Berrichons, had set up together in Paris in 1831. They had parted at the end of 1832, as a result, according to George Sand's champions,⁶ of Sandeau's infidelity. At first Balzac had sympathized with Sandeau, befriended him and lodged him for a time at the Rue Cassini. But later he came over to George Sand's side and turned bitterly against him. Even while Balzac was finishing *Béatrix* this hostility was increased by the appearance of Sandeau's "roman à clé," *Marianna*, in which, so Balzac writes, Sand's character was "dragged in the mud." So Sandeau was called upon to bear, not only the odium of having contributed to the composition of the shallow, self-centered Conti, but also of posing as model for Étienne Lousteau, the literary failure and unprincipled journalist of *Illusions perdues*. Furthermore, in 1843, his dealings with George Sand and his alleged betrayal of her became the nucleus for the seduction and betrayal of Dinah de La Baudraye in *La Muse du département*. Nonetheless, to return to *Béatrix*, it is far from certain that Sandeau alone provides Conti with his vanity and conceit. Franz Liszt almost certainly comes into the picture, however stoutly Balzac may have denied this in 1840, at the request of Sand,⁷ and in 1843, when writing to Mme Hanska. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*. The charlatanry of Liszt was as evident in real life as that of Conti in fiction. Even benevolent biographers like Dr. Walter Beckett⁸ are strongly impressed with the likeness. But Liszt was fairly thick-skinned. Marie d'Agoult recognized herself in *Béatrix de Rochefide*, and was indignant. She complained not only to Liszt himself, but also to Lamennais. M. Jacques Vier has recently published Lamennais' commiserating reply.⁹ Liszt laughed the matter off, and brought Marie into personal contact with Balzac. She was won over. It appears that later she even took some

5. See Maurice Regard, *L'Adversaire des romantiques: Gustave Planche* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1955), I, 243-51.

6. But see Mabel Silver, *Jules Sandeau, l'homme et l'œuvre*, pp. 44-45.

7. Maurois, *Lélia*, p. 292.

8. *Liszt* (London: Dent, 1956).

9. Article in *L'Ecole*, November 11, 1950.

pride in the thought of having furnished a great novelist with a pattern for one of his *grandes pécheresses*.

So Balzac seems to have broken some window-panes in writing *Béatrix*. Sometimes he was gleeful, sometimes regretful at the thought of it. According to Bernard Potocki, he boasted that through *Béatrix* he had "embroiled the two females"—Sand and Agoult. In February 1840 he confessed to Mme Hanska: "Non, je n'étais pas heureux en faisant *Béatrix*" (*LE*, I, 527)—possibly because he felt remorseful after becoming better acquainted with Mme d'Agoult through Liszt's intervention. But even in *Béatrix*, where we catch him most patently in the act of exploiting real people and real events, the work of the inventive artist eclipses that of the narrator of scandals. Balzac is an adept at muddling the cards. That is why commentators have been inspired to discern at least three women in Henriette de Mortsau: Mme de Berny, Sarah Guidoboni-Visconti, and Mme Hanska. Félicité des Touches is not purely and simply an idealization of George Sand. Balzac transfers to her Sand's addiction to tobacco as well as her "air de princesse." He even traduces Sand by making Félicité abominate children. He fuses her with other models. Félicité's physical portrait for instance is that of the actress Mlle Georges. And there may also be a bit of George Sand in *Béatrix de Rochefide*, for if Conti is to be equated with Jules Sandeau, then one is tempted to complete the equation and say that *Béatrix* is George Sand. And though George as Camille Maupin is the "monstrous exception" of a female writer who has made good, one may suspect that there is a trace of her in the blue-stocking Mme de Bargeton who, in *Illusions perdues*, migrates from Angoulême to Paris in company with another young writer, Lucien de Rubempré, who also has more than a touch of Jules Sandeau in him.¹⁰ There may also be a touch of Sand in Dinah de La Baudraye, since there is a lot of Sandeau in Etienne Lousteau. But the fact is that, even while composing *Béatrix*, Balzac progressively rid himself of the embarrassing presence of real persons and launched out into the current of imaginative invention. Many years ago, the late Joachim Merlant, in a study of the manuscript fragments of *Béatrix*, showed by dint of what gropings Balzac effects the composition of a portrait.¹¹ He throws off a first sketch, adds other features here and there, gathers the whole together when he is revising the proof, adds much and rarely deletes. "Il arrive ainsi à composer ces portraits où de brusques raccourcis alternent avec des causeries complaisantes [...] Nous assistons à un épanouissement spontané, ou plutôt à une génération successive: tantôt les premiers traits s'amplifient, tantôt des traits nouveaux se greffent sur les précédents. Le portrait gagne en intensité, et il se complète." With such a method of development, it is easy to see how rapidly Balzac would get away from any initial model; how inspiration would take the place of mere reporting; how

10. Sandeau had been perturbed about this in 1837. See Maurois, *Lélia*, p. 288.

11. "Le Manuscrit de *Béatrix* de Balzac," *RHL*, 1913, pp. 613-14.

a composite portrait would result in which real features—those moreover of different real people—and imaginary people would coalesce. M. Merlant summed up the process in an appropriate formula: "Comme l'abeille, Balzac picore partout."

So much for the cases in which we have Balzac's own admissions about the use of real people. There are hundreds of other characters in the *Comédie humaine* for whom speculative readers have found models. Usually it is a case of one prominent trait or characteristic being isolated as belonging to such and such an original. Thus Rastignac as a political careerist is Thiers. Maxime de Trailles as a *viveur* is the Marquis de Montrond. The Baron de Nucingen is James de Rothschild, the point of contact between them being that both are Germanized Jews and that both have the Midas touch. When we come to Balzac's world of writers, journalists and artists who play so large a part in the novels of 1839, we find that possible prototypes are even more numerous than the fictitious characters. Half a dozen different names have been attached to the newspaper-proprietor Andoche Finot, to the poet-novelist Raoul Nathan, to the poetaster Lucien de Rubempré and the journalist Etienne Lousteau. Certain *bêtes noires* of Balzac like Jules Janin and, after, 1838, Jules Sandeau, are identified, now with Lucien de Rubempré, now with Lousteau.

Some identifications are fairly authentic, provided that by identifications we merely mean that Balzac has taken a real person as a spring-board and let his imagination do the rest. For example, the ex-ironmonger and old friend of Balzac, Théodore Dablin, is Pillerault in *César Birotteau*, Balzac's mother is Mme Bridau in *La Rabouilleuse*, Eugène Delacroix is Joseph Bridau. But in speculating over a large number of characters it is only too easy to forget that Balzac often puts into them some aspect of himself, some facet of his own experience, some undeveloped potentiality within himself. Such is the case with such widely different personalities as Raphaël de Valentin, Louis Lambert, Félix de Vandenesse, César Birotteau, Albert Savarus, Sylvain Pons, and even Lucien de Rubempré; and, even more obviously, that austere and scrupulous writer, the leader of the "Cénacle de la Rue des Quatre Vents," Daniel d'Arthez. D'Arthez again has been credited with a number of prototypes ranging from Balzac's schoolfellow Barchou de Penhoën to Alfred de Vigny. How more patently is he a representation of Balzac himself—and not only for his outstanding virtues, but also for a certain naivety which, as Balzac alleges, goes with lofty genius, and which, in *Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan*, brings him into the toils of a practiced coquette! For the Balzac who wept and stormed over the coquetry of Mme de Castries in 1832 was able, seven years later, to see the funny side of it when he showed d'Arthez as a piece of putty in the hands of Diane de Cadignan.

When we approach certain special cases of identification or near identification, we find it difficult not to convict Balzac of a certain amount of

malice or malevolence. There is for instance the case of the Civil Servant of *Les Employés* (1837), the cartoonist, caricaturist, mimic and practical joker Bixiou ("prononcez Bisou," says Balzac). Here the identification is certain. The question is, where in Balzac's characterization of him does Henry Monnier leave off and the fictitious Bixiou take over? Monnier and Balzac had been friends since 1825. Monnier illustrated some of Balzac's works, invented the type of pompous, platitudinous *bourgeois* Joseph Prudhomme, whom Balzac many times imitated and of course perfected in the *Comédie humaine*, and whom many times Balzac thought of making the hero of plays in which Monnier, who was a good actor, should take the leading part. Balzac admired and praised Monnier; but this did not prevent him from making Bixiou a disagreeable sort of person, in *Les Employés*, *La Maison Nucingen* (1838) and elsewhere. A man of superior talent, he suffers from a sense of frustration which makes him an uncomfortable friend and a dangerous enemy. He is a cynical wit, spiteful, and addicted to mystifications which come near to sadism: "[. . .] misanthrope bouffon [. . .] un diable enragé d'avoir dépensé tant d'esprit en pure perte [. . .] donnant son coup de pied à chacun [. . .] sautant sur toutes les épaules comme un clown, et tâchant d'y laisser une marque à la façon du bourreau." What secret antagonism existed between Balzac and Monnier? It is to be divined in the revenge Monnier took on Balzac in 1857, in *Les Mémoires de M. Joseph Prudhomme*, where, in relating a visit Balzac made to Latouche at Aulnay, circa 1830, he shows him not merely as a comic but also as a coarse and grotesque figure. Yet it is not Monnier's resentment, but Balzac's attitude, which puzzles. Did he realize that since he had given Bixiou so much of Monnier's personal history and characteristics Monnier might reasonably have taken offence? Miss Melcher, in her book on Monnier, suggests that Balzac's process in this case was, by "sharpening the focus in the manner of the skilled caricaturist," to detect and develop traits and tendencies which were only latent in Monnier.¹²

The poet Canalis is an amusing case, because readers of the *Comédie humaine* cannot help associating him with Lamartine, whatever Balzac's real intentions may have been. He first appeared by name in *Un Début dans la vie* (1842)—as a politician; but he had figured anonymously as a poet with political ambitions in the second part of *Illusions perdues*. He only blossomed out into a fully developed character in *Modeste Mignon* (1844), and then was worked back into earlier novels such as *La Peau de chagrin*. Canalis is a poet of whom Balzac always writes with contempt. He is an aristocrat, and trades upon the fact. He is a "poète de sacristie," devoid of real creative talent, who has gone in for the yearning, soulful kind of poetry most likely to appeal to women. He is in fact a member of the "Ecole Angélique" of which Lamartine is the leader. Balzac rarely misses an opportunity to expose his vanity, fatuousness and determination

12. Edith Melcher, *The Life and Times of Henry Monnier* (1950), p. 172.

to get on at all costs: "au moral une espèce de Narcisse." He does in fact get on—in politics—and is several times a minister during the July Monarchy. Now quite a variety of other candidates have been suggested for the doubtful honor of having sat as a model for Canalis: Chateaubriand, Thiers, Eugène Sue, and even Franz Liszt. As usual Balzac has borrowed traits here and there. Canalis had begun his career as a sort of unofficial poet laureate like Victor Hugo; in *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin* we learn that he has written a poem suspiciously like Vigny's *Eloa*. But although, in discreet moments, Balzac is careful to distinguish Canalis from Lamartine, the real leader of the "Angelic School," the temptation to find large doses of Lamartine in Canalis is well-nigh irresistible. Balzac was not exactly enamored either of Lamartine or Hugo as poets. He certainly dedicated *César Birotteau* to Lamartine in the edition of 1844, and in *Les Paysans*, that part of it published in 1844, he paid him a compliment as a poet who eschewed periphrases and called the heavenly bodies by their name—which is a thing Lamartine did not always do. Would it be fanciful to see in these two tributes a sop to Balzac's own conscience for having had *Lamartine* too much in mind when writing *Modeste Mignon* at the beginning of the same year? It seems undeniable that Balzac nourished some animus against Lamartine (and against Hugo too) as poets who were successfully turning to public life, and thus launching out into a career which Balzac had tried but failed to embrace. Lamartine for his part never appears to have suspected Balzac of caricaturing him. Was this because it was above his dignity to have acknowledged such a suspicion, or because his self-esteem (like that of Canalis) was too firmly founded for him to have regarded himself as vulnerable?

Nevertheless, let us give Balzac the benefit of the doubt and suppose that he was satirizing, not the great Angelic Poet, but the *genre* of Angelic Poetry. Even so he was sailing close to the wind. Professor Barrère has argued that he was doing so also in 1846 when, in *La Cousine Bette*, he took Hector Hulot, approximately homophonous with Victor Hugo, as the type of philandering husband whose infidelities to his wife, Adeline Fischer, approximately homophonous with Adèle Foucher, may to some extent recall those of the lover of Juliette Drouet and Léonie Biard.¹³ Professor Barrère believes that Balzac went further still, and based the episode in which Baron Hulot is caught in *flagrante delicto* with Valérie Marneffe on the historic episode of July 1845 when Hugo was surprised in a similar position with Mme Biard. This of course is beyond the possibility of proof,¹⁴ but the coincidence suggests that Balzac, as the "abeille [qui] picore partout," was not a fanatic for discretion. However little there may have remained of Marie d'Agoult in Béatrix de Rochefide, of George

13. "Hugo jaugé par Balzac," *Mercure de France*, January 1, 1950.

14. There were two Hulots, generals and barons, alive when Balzac was writing; also a Hector d'Aure, who may have provided the Christian name. See the article by Pierre Saint-Girons in *Etudes balzaciennes*, No. 2 (Sept.-Dec., 1951). It may be recalled also that there was a Marquis de Rastignac living at the time Balzac was writing *Le Père Goriot*.

Sand in Camille Maupin, of Gustave Planche in Claude Vignon, of Monnier in Bixiou, of Lamartine in Canal, of Hugo in Hulot, there is enough to make it plain that Balzac was embarrassingly self-indulgent in helping himself to traits of living persons or incidents in their lives.

Sometimes the originals deserved nothing better, as when in *La Muse du département* he borrowed an episode from the life of Jules Janin. On the birth of a daughter to his mistress the Comtesse de La Cart, Janin had had notifications printed and circulated in his own name. Etienne Lousteau does a similar thing in *La Muse du département*. Such caddishness, especially in a consistent detractor, called for such treatment. But a final case will serve to show that Balzac was not excessively delicate even in his use of the personal history of his closest friends.

The case is that of Zulma Carraud and her husband. Until 1831 Major Carraud was a director of studies at the military school of Saint-Cyr. Then he was put in charge of a government powder-factory near Angoulême, before retiring in 1834 and going to live with his wife and two children at the château of Fraples, near Issoudun. Balzac often stayed with them, and his correspondence with Zulma Carraud, edited since by M. Bouteron, is a precious source for students of Balzac. In the summer of 1832 Balzac even made advances to Zulma, but they were repulsed. Carraud had been a prisoner of war in England for eight years, and privations there had sapped his energy and initiative. So that, in this marriage partnership, it was Zulma who wore the trousers. She was aware of it, and several times, in her letters to Honoré, gives the impression of a wife who by a sense of duty rather than passionate love, and by devotion to her children, keeps her little household together. We also get the impression that her husband, though an excellent person, is somewhat colorless and unenterprising: "atonie morale" is the term Zulma uses in reference to him. As for Balzac, Zulma was very fond of him. But this affection was spiritual, and not physical; and the utmost she permitted herself was to muse on the theme of how good a wife she could have made him had things turned out differently.

We can imagine Balzac rubbing his hands over such data. According to M. Le Yaouanc¹⁵ he used them in *Le Lys dans la vallée*, where Mme de Mortsauf stands in a similar relationship to her husband, also a returned prisoner of war, as Zulma did to Major Carraud. In reality Mme de Berny's husband, a troublesome and uncongenial person, was better fitted for the part of M. de Mortsauf, a peevish, unstable hypochondriac who has little if any affinity with Carraud. In my view *Les Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* (1841-42) provides a much better case. There Balzac sets in contrast two young women: Louise de Chaulieu, who goes all out for romantic passion and gets it—to her cost—and Renée de Maucombe, who accepts a *mariage de raison* and nobly devotes herself to the care of her children and the career of her nonentity of a husband, Louis de L'Estorade.¹⁶ He too owes to

15. "Notes balzaciennes," *RHL*, (Oct.-Dec., 1953).

privations as a prisoner of war his lack of zest and initiative. And in this novel the letters of Renée to her old school-friend Louise have quite close correspondence to those Zulma Carraud wrote to Balzac. In both cases the theme is that of the wife shouldering the responsibilities and bearing the burdens of a tender and anxious mother. The reflexions of Renée de L'Estorade—that "docteur en corset"—on marriage and its meaning are an expansion of those of Zulma in her letters of the late 1830's.

The notable difference is certainly that François-Michel Carraud, even as glimpsed in Zulma's letters, is far more sturdy, far more likable than the negative Louis de L'Estorade. But there is no reason to doubt that Balzac used the Carraud *ménage* as a model for the *mariage de raison* which, as usual in his works, he prefers to alliances founded on heady passion. By the time he wrote the *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées* he and Zulma were drifting farther and farther apart. But when she read the novel it is unlikely that one so perceptive as she could have failed to notice how much Balzac had gleaned from their relationship. If she felt that he had been indelicate, no doubt she would be ready to excuse him on the grounds that with a genius the spirit bloweth whither it listeth. Nor was there much danger of contemporary readers tumbling to the source of Balzac's material. After all the situation treated is a universal one. How many good wives have there been, are and will be, who (rightly) regard themselves as the mainstay of the home, but who nourish perfectly innocent dreams about the might-have-been, an alliance with a kindred spirit which would not have been quite so humdrum and packed with cares and duties?

We may then conclude that, however mysterious and untraceable the processes whereby Balzac laid hold on real persons, real facts and real relationships and metamorphosed them into fiction, there is quite a large number of real people on whom he levied tribute. How interesting it would be to know more about the reactions of those who realized that they had provided him with a character or a subject! We know what Marie d'Agoult's reaction had been. We know what an interest the gentle and unselfish Laure de Berny took in the creation of her second self, Mme de Mortsauf. What did Mme de Castries think of Antoinette de Langeais? What would Lady Ellenborough have thought of Arabelle Dudley had her quest for the perfect love allowed her time to fritter away on novel-reading? How did George Sand react inwardly when Balzac, in his portrait of Camille Maupin, laid such emphasis on the hermaphrodite element in her make-up,¹⁶ and implied that any normal man would think twice before allowing himself to fall in love with her? "On a peur de trouver en elle," he writes of Camille as she was in 1836, "je ne sais quoi de vierge, d'indompté." Or, as he put it in a letter to Mme Hanska when trying to convince the latter that his

16. The name itself embodies this characteristic: Camille from Latouche's *Fragoletta*, Maupin from Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, with the suggestion of Sand's maiden-name (Aurore Dupin) thrown in.

dealings with "le camarade Sand" were beyond reproach: "Son mâle était rare [...] Il le sera d'autant plus qu'elle n'est point aimable, et, par conséquent, elle ne sera que très difficilement aimée. Elle est garçon, elle est artiste, elle est grande, généreuse, dévouée, *chaste*; elle a les grands traits de l'homme; *ergo*, elle n'est pas femme" (*LE*, I, 463; February 10, 1838). However subtly this is translated in *Béatrix*, it is there in substance. But there is something to be said for being a great writer's victim. Many people, male or female, Monnier or Marie d'Agoult, may have found cause for satisfaction in the thought of having posed for Balzac. How many women would have liked to think of themselves as the Orientally and irresistibly passionate Arabelle Dudley? How many more still, possessing a different kind of temperament, liked to fancy themselves as Henriette de Mortsau? In fact, in the letter of 1836 (*LE*, I, 351), whose real purpose was to put Balzac in the clear about his suspected dalliance with Sarah Guidoboni-Visconti, he tells Mme Hanska of having received "five formal complaints" from women who pretended to be outraged at having their private life thus unveiled to public gaze. "Il paraît qu'il y a autant de MM de Mortsau (and consequently of Mmes de Mortsau) qu'il y a d'anges à Clochegourde." We may be sure that these five "complaints" were not so much complaints as stoutly urged claims to a very great distinction—the distinction of having posed in Balzac's studio.

REVIEWS

Dante und Aristoteles: Das Convivio und der mehrfache Schriftsinn. Von Elizabeth von Roon-Bassermann. Freiburg: Herder, 1956. Pp. xi + 131.

To be fair to this little study, we should remember that it is a "by-product" of an earlier work by the author: *Die Weissen und die Schwarzen von Florenz: Dante und die Chronik des Dino Compagni* (Freiburg, 1954). Frau von Roon herself informs us about the connection between the two works. The present book is an excursion into foreign territory for the author, but her reading in medieval philosophy and theology, though perhaps somewhat disorganized, is remarkable. Her earlier work had grown out of her studies in Florentine history, and makes profitable reading even for those who might be inclined to reject, also "that book's thesis." She attempted there to prove nothing less than that Dino Compagni's *Chronicle* is Dante's! This affirmation is related to the concept of the four levels of meaning that have captivated the author (p. 107).

In the book on Compagni certain themes of the present work had already been dealt with: the multiple levels (pp. 19 ff.), the rules of Tyconius (p. 131 ff.). This new book on the *Convivio* is the kind of monograph that narrows the value of a perhaps fruitful idea by using it as a *passe-partout*—a magic device by which every difficulty can presumably be resolved.

Books of this type are not rare in the history of Dante criticism. And when their authors join enough brashness to their obsessive idea, they are "der Ueberzeugung [...], dass alle bisherige Danteforschung von dieser Grundlage aus revidiert werden muss"—a mentality and form certainly more suitable to a business man than to a reader of Dante.¹ Should the author not be quite sure of himself, he will fall back on calling himself an "average reader," and hide his feeling of superiority behind a not altogether convincing modesty. Moreover, if an author's magic device, as in the present case, is the idea that Dante praises Aristotle in the *Convivio* "ironically," but actually means Plato and his successors, the question arises in the reader's mind whether the author's own frequently extravagant praise of other critics, who are afterwards attacked, is not also meant "ironically" (p. x: Busnelli and Vandelli; p. 6, n. 7: Nardi and Gilson; p. 43, n. 1: Auerbach; p. 62, n. 7: Dempf; p. 83: Porena, Momigliano, Gmelin, etc.).

In view of the book's not altogether lucid style, I shall analyze as briefly as possible the connection of each successive chapter—insofar as I myself understand them—with the central thesis. My personal comments will be added in parentheses.

Introduction. The *Convivio* can be understood only by constant awareness of the multiple meanings characteristic of medieval writings. (This, in

1. R. Palgen, *Werden und Wesen der Komödie Dantes* (Graz, 1956), p. 11.

my opinion, is, in one way, a commonplace, and, in another, an exaggeration. The four levels of meaning, as the author is well aware [p. 25, n. 3], concern the interpretation of the Bible. For all other literary works—even those with spiritual themes—it is common knowledge that two meanings suffice, one of which is literal, and another figurative. [See the enlightening new article "Dante's 'allegory of poets' and the medieval theory of poetic fiction" by R. H. Green, *Comp. Lit.*, IX (1957), 118 ff.]. It is true that I found but few cases where the author's interpretations actually employ all four of the medieval levels of meaning [e.g. pp. 26, 46, 58]. What she really means by "Doppelsinn" is something altogether different and quite modern: the irony which she would have us see in the references to Aristotle in the *Convivio* [e.g. pp. 2, 16 ff., 36, 50, 70 ff., etc.].

Chapter I. Dante introduces Aristotle with a contradiction (*Conv.* I, ix, 9) in order to discredit him "secretly" from the very beginning.

Chapter II. The well-known comparison of the crystal heaven with mortality (II, xiii, 8; xiv, 14-18) is based on St. Bonaventura, not on Aristotle.

Chapter III. Dante only appears to accept "ruling," rather than contemplative angels. In reality he concurs, in his doctrine of Intelligence, with Plato, not Aristotle. (Yet Dante himself reconciles the opposition between the two kinds of angels in an express vindication of Aristotle: "non è contra quello che par dire Aristotele [...] Come pure la speculativa convegna loro" [the "sustanze separate"], "pure a la speculazione di certe segue la circulazione del cielo" [II, iv, 13]).

Chapter IV. When Dante calls Aristotle "il mio maestro" (I, ix, 9 and elsewhere), he does not mean him but Christ. (What the "Buchstabenspiel" [pp. 20 ff.] has to do with this, I was unable to understand. It should be evident, in view of the "Magister Christus" [Matthew XXIII, 8, 10 and later St. Bonaventura], that Aristotle is meant only analogically. Under no circumstances is this sufficient proof of Dante's mental reservation).

Chapter V. The Donna Gentile as "Filosofia" is of Platonic-Ciceronian, not Aristotelian, origin. For that reason alone could Dante liken her, as "Sapienza Divina," to Christ (III, xiv, 7). (Frau von Roon even insists on identifying her with Christ [p. 26]. Once again a slight, almost a sly attack by Dante on Aristotle is intimated [p. 28 ff.], and—here as elsewhere—the assumption rests on a *petitio principii* [p. 29], rather than an impartial attempt at proof).

Chapter VI. Dante's concept of "Authority" precludes the possibility that "ein kritisierter Aristoteles für den Titel *filosofo sommo* überhaupt in Frage kommt" (p. 41). (But the "average reader" whom Frau von Roon incessantly invokes, might wonder, among other things, why later on in the poem Aristotle, and not Plato—to say nothing of Cicero—sits in the center of the "filosofica famiglia" [Inf. IV, 130 ff.]. Is that also to be taken ironically and interpreted according to multiple meanings?)

Chapter VII. Dante names the eleven Virtues of Aristotle (*Conv.* IV, xvii, 4-8), but he really "means" the four Cardinal Virtues of Plato. (In "per lo'ngegno [...] quasi divino" [IV, vi, 15], we are to see, "divino" notwithstanding, an intended degradation of Aristotle—since we cannot but understand *ingenium* in Cicero "als Einschränkung des dem Stagiriten vielerorts von Cicero gespendeten Lobes" [p. 47]. Such are the author's "proofs." And she is mistaken when she interprets the doctrines of Virtue in Plato and in Aristotle as antithetic. [Cf. below, not to Appendix III].)

Chapter VIII. Beatrice is interpreted anagogically as Jerusalem in keeping with the Augustinian-Bonaventurian concept of "mens" (p. 57). (The Latin quotation from Jeremiah [*Vita Nuova*, XXVIII, 1], which is justified, to be sure, by its powerful poetic effect alone,² gains in inner necessity from this interpretation. Here I am tempted to agree with the author. This is one of the occasions where she uses the old levels of meaning in a positive way.)

Chapter IX. Nathan (*Par.* XII, 136) represents the Old Testament in the three circles which, according to the author, prefigure the Trinity (pp. 59 ff.). Joachim di Fiore and Siger de Brabant are in Paradise as "je . . . ein—geretteter—Judas" (p. 67). (Both in this chapter and the preceding one the connection with the main theme of "Dante and Aristotle"—except for the pages on Nathan in Augustine [pp. 59 ff.]—appears to have been lost sight of).

Chapter X. Dante "ironically" condemns Aristotle's doctrine of the earth as fixed, while praising it "dem Wortsinne nach" (*Conv.* III, v, 7).³

At this point four appendices, in small print, are added (pp. 75-128).

Appendices I and II. Brunetto Latini is called (*Inf.* XV) a "proud man" instead of a "Sodomite" (in the old sense), and there is a new interpretation of the hierarchy of sins in the four lower circles of Hell. (But circle VI does not really belong to the "Basso Inferno"). The author is still intent on separating Dante from Aristotle. (Space prevents me from going into these questions at greater length. A. Pézard is mentioned only in passing [pp. 79 ff.]. The distinction between the gravity of sins in Hell and Purgatory, according to *causa efficiens* and *causa finalis*—the author calls them "Tat" and "Haltung" [p. 78]—applies only to sins of malice, since the latter are not the concern of Purgatory at all. But where there is repentance for "malitia," the deed caused by it is reduced to its motivation [Sin of Passion]. Sins of *incontinentia*, like "gola" [Ciacco and Forese Donati] are not subject

2. See this reviewer's *Sehen und Wirklichkeit bei Dante* (Frankfurt a.M., 1957), pp. 151 ff. I have never been able to understand Vo 'er's judgment, which Frau von Roon endorses (p. 58).

3. If Dante did believe that the earth moved, his concept of "Fortuna" would be more readily understandable. Fortune, a tenth Intelligence, "volve sua spera" (*Inf.* VII, 96). This "spera" can only be the earth, even if stationary. However, the transition from a "rolling sphere" or "turning wheel" of the folk goddess "Fortuna" to "spera" would be more organic, if this "sphere"—the earth—were thought of as moved by the poet.

to the author's attempted differentiation [p. 78, n. 9]. Besides a recent commentary [Porena], she could have used older works like those by W. H. V. Reade [1909] and Busnelli [1906].⁴ Reade's great opus—still important despite recognized shortcomings—is based, it is true, on the assumption of Dante's exclusive dependency on Thomas Aquinas. Frau von Roon opposes this position which, as a matter of fact, is no longer accepted today without reservations by anybody).

Appendix III. A more extensive attempt to show that, in the *Convivio*, Dante has in mind, not the Aristotelian, but the Platonic system of Virtues. (I should merely like to say here that the difference between the Platonic and Aristotelian ethics is not to be found in their respective doctrines of the Virtues. Aristotle's doctrine is not designed to replace Plato's but rather to elaborate on it.⁵ Since Dante, on the other hand, is primarily interested in virtues, vices, and punishments, rather than in Plato's or Aristotle's metaphysics, it would seem that the author's thesis of Dante's "irony" towards Aristotle—irrespective of its value—forces an open door. Why, for instance, call in Cicero via Brunetto Latini, as a model for Dante's "führende prudenza" [p. 101], if in Aristotle, too, the ethical virtues can be *οὐκ ἀγαθοὶ φρονήσεις* [*Eth. Nic. Z* 13, 1144b 20 ff.], an idea, by the way, which is repeated expressly by Dante [IV, xvii, 8]?)⁶

Appendix IV. An addition to the author's book on Compagni with which this review cannot be concerned.

I am unable to show here in detail how little justice the author's method does to her wide reading and her radical thesis. Few, if any, of her examples of Dante's alleged irony towards Aristotle were convincing to me. I have already given samples of the subjectivity of her method. One of the author's greatest shortcomings is a lack of clarity of expression which she might have remedied by following the examples of her favorite writers, Bonaventura and Gilson. I am convinced that a more methodical reworking of her great mass of material would make the author see that she has overstated her thesis. Had this study been better organized, many good points—for example, the significant proofs of the influence of the *Trésor* on Dante—would have made a deeper impression. We could also do without the frivolous tone and ironic quips which are so out of place in a scholarly work.

The reader keeps on asking one basic question: "Even if the book's thesis were valid, why should Dante have undertaken this mystification at all? For what purpose would he have pretended to consider Aristotle the "sommo filosofo"? Let us hope that Frau von Roon-Bassermann's answer will not be, "from fear of public opinion!" That would hardly be in keeping

4. Reade, *The Moral System of Dante's Inferno* (Oxford, 1909); Busnelli, *La concezione del Purgatorio dantesco*, 2nd ed. (Roma, 1906).

5. See for example Max Wentscher, *Geschichte der Ethik* (Berlin, 1931), pp. 29 ff. Cf. p. 19.

6. The author's translation here (p. 100) is misleading: "avegna che sia" ought to be rendered by "obwohl sie sei" (not "ist"), since this refers to Aristotle's opinion.

with Dante's character. It was another matter with Torquato Tasso who, for years, cultivated a clandestine Platonism under the cloak of official Aristotelianism. He was a timid soul, Dante was not.⁷

Almost all the references to Aristotle lack line numbers—1170b, instead of 1170b 17—thus making verification difficult. A bibliography of the many works cited would also have been desirable.

Some minor errors: p. 3: instead of "Aristoteles" read "Plato"; 8, n. 14: "V, 26," (not "V, 25"); 27, n. 14: "stabiliebat" (not "stablebat"); 29: "IV, viii, 2" (not "IV, vii, 2"); 36: "1012 a, 18 ff." (not "1012 a, 17"); 50, n. 3: there is nothing in Gilson, p. 141, about "similitudo"; 62, n. 12: "Itin. III, 1" concerns the direct quotation only; the rest in the text concerns IV, 2,3; 61, n. 4: the article by Barbi is not to be found in "*Studi danteschi XXV*"; 71, l.17 from bottom: "Erde" (not "Lehre"); 107: instead of "interprètes" read (in the original as well) "interprètes."

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ULRICH LEO

Berthier's Journal de Trévoux and the Philosophes. By John N. Pappas. (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, edited by Theodore Besterman, Vol. III). Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1957. Pp. 238.

L'immense compilation que forment les *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts*, plus connus sous le nom de *Journal de Trévoux* (265 volumes qui s'étendent de 1701 à 1767), avait jusqu'ici peu attiré les chercheurs. Seuls deux Jésuites, Sommervogel et Dumas, s'y étaient attachés mais uniquement pour en faire l'histoire extérieure. Etant assez assurés qu'un journal de jésuites n'était et ne pouvait être qu'un dépôt d'idées réactionnaires, représentant nécessairement une opposition de principe au siècle des lumières, les historiens des idées n'avaient guère songé à vérifier cette hypothèse simpliste. Or voici que coup sur coup deux excellents ouvrages, celui de M. Pappas et celui du Père Desautels (*Les Mémoires de Trévoux et le mouvement des idées au XVIII^e siècle*) nous forcent à poser de nouveau la question et à reviser l'attitude commode dans laquelle nous nous enfermions volontiers. Il est bien vrai que, sur les questions proprement religieuses, les jésuites ne pouvaient rester neutres et ils devaient à leur profession et à leur Ordre de défendre avec fermeté l'orthodoxie de la doctrine et de la morale. Mais on est étonné de voir le peu de place que tient la polémique religieuse dans les pages de leur journal, au moins après 1745. Il est rare que les jésuites déclanchent la bataille car ils ont trop à cœur de ne pas multiplier encore le nombre déjà considérable de leurs ennemis. Ils l'acceptent seulement lorsqu'elle leur est, pour ainsi dire, imposée, et ils ont hâte de déposer les armes dès qu'ils estiment avoir fait leur devoir. Par contre, ils se montrent extraordinairement accueillants aux

7. For further details see the reviewer's *Torquato Tasso* (Bern, 1951). Cf. Index of names, s.v. "Aristoteles" and "Plato."

idées nouvelles, faisant de vrais et sincères efforts, même lorsqu'elles se présentent sous les formes les plus extrêmes, pour les rattacher par quelque joint au large courant de la philosophie traditionnelle. C'est ainsi que le *Journal de Trévoux*, différent en cela des *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, se trouve être non pas une caricature, ni même une satire, mais un témoin de l'esprit du temps, offrant une transcription intelligente, modérée, peut-être quelquefois atténuée mais non point déformée, toujours impartiale et souvent favorable, des grand courants de la pensée française au XVIII^e siècle. Et l'on est bien forcé de conclure que lorsque Lanson renvoie dos à dos le *Journal de Trévoux* et les *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* comme des organes subversifs, étroits d'esprit et de tendances, des obstacles au progrès, c'est qu'il n'avait jamais pris la peine de lire attentivement les pages du *Journal* pas plus d'ailleurs, sans doute, que celles plus illisibles encore de la feuille janséniste.

Telle est, en tout cas, l'impression générale qui se dégage de l'étude méticuleuse de M. Pappas. Mais c'est moins du *Journal de Trévoux* qu'il s'occupe que de son plus éminent directeur le Père Berthier. Ou, si l'on veut, c'est du *Journal* à travers Berthier car, après 1745, date à laquelle il en assume la direction, le Père et le *Journal* ne font qu'un. Alors que dans les années précédentes de nombreux jésuites collaborent à la rédaction, c'est maintenant Berthier qui suffit à tout. Il se débarrasse bientôt de son trop turbulent confrère, le fameux Père Castel. Il écrit lui-même les articles de fond, les comptes rendus détaillés de cent ouvrages traitant de matières les plus diverses, théologie, bien sûr, mais aussi philosophie, sciences, littérature, arts, politique. Ne le voit-on pas prendre part lui aussi à la Querelle des boutons, où il se range aux côtés de Rousseau, en défenseur de la musique italienne? Partout le Père fait montre d'une assez rare compétence, de vastes connaissances, d'un jugement sûr, et, qualité tout aussi nécessaire chez un critique, d'un solide bon sens. Esprit alerte, avisé, curieux, il n'est point d'idée nouvelle qu'il ne consente à examiner de bonne foi, qu'il ne reçoive, à moins qu'elle ne soit en conflit direct et inconciliable avec la doctrine. Idée de tolérance religieuse, idée de progrès, droits de la raison dans le domaine qui lui est propre, mais aussi, en se guidant sur l'autorité, dans le domaine de la croyance, idée de réformes sociales, qui l'apparente avec Voltaire, sur l'inique répartition des impôts et les injustices dont souffrent les paysans, le Père les adopte toutes, mêmes lorsqu'elles lui arrivent par l'intermédiaire de plumes impies. Peu d'auteurs ont été aussi ridiculisés, aussi vilipendés par Voltaire que ce Père Berthier, héros grotesque de l'exquise *Relation de la maladie, de la confession, et de la mort du jésuite Berthier*, bientôt suivie de la relation de son apparition. On sait maintenant, après ce travail laborieux, que Berthier fut une autre victime de l'injuste ressentiment de Voltaire, tout comme les Coger (pecus), les Larcher, les Riballier, l'abbé Guénée, qui étaient non seulement d'honnêtes gens mais aussi, bien souvent, d'authentiques savants.

M. Pappas suit patiemment Berthier dans ses démêlés avec Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, l'Encyclopédie, qui constituent autant de chapitres de son livre. Il rétablit, en passant, quelques erreurs trop longtemps accréditées. On ne peut plus enseigner que Berthier a été dès les débuts un ennemi irréductible de l'Encyclopédie dont il aurait attaqué même le Prospectus. Il prouve de façon tout à fait concluante que les jésuites n'eurent aucune part ni à la direction, ni à la rédaction du *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*. Mais en plaçant ainsi son auteur au centre, ou à la périphérie, de la plupart des grands mouvements d'idées du siècle, M. Pappas a cru parfois devoir en tracer rapidement la genèse et le développement. Il nous fait ainsi, en moins de trois pages, l'histoire du gallicanisme et du jansénisme. C'est aller chercher bien loin une explication de la tolérance des jésuites que de remonter à la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes, parce que le pape Innocent XI l'aurait désapprouvée. M. Pappas établit ainsi sur ce point une distinction regrettable entre l'attitude de la Compagnie de Jésus et celle du clergé français qu'il accuse, au moins implicitement, d'intolérance. On sait assez que les mesures de répression étaient l'affaire des parlements jansénistes, plutôt que des sanctions ecclésiastiques. D'ailleurs la bibliographie de M. Pappas, sur cette matière comme sur bien d'autres, me paraît singulièrement indigente, et il m'est difficile de deviner les critères qui ont guidé son choix. Il faut avouer qu'il a un peu trop l'esprit de clocher et qu'il s'en remet, avec trop de satisfaction, aux ouvrages sortis de la plume de ses maîtres. Ouvrages excellents, sans doute, mais enfin qui n'épuisent pas tous les multiples problèmes, fondamentaux et accessoires, auxquels il touche. M. Pappas, dont je ne soupçonne pas pour autant la modestie, crée un peu l'impression d'appuyer sa biographie de Berthier sur des documents d'archives découverts par lui. Il a, en fait, dépouillé avec diligence les cabinets de manuscrits d'un grand nombre de bibliothèques, mais son butin, il faut bien le dire, est assez léger et consiste surtout dans un *Discours sur la fermeté* composé par Berthier pour l'éducation du Dauphin que M. Pappas exploite plus que de raison. Au vrai, les seuls documents d'archives qui puissent avoir quelque importance sur les jésuites français au XVIII^e siècle se trouvent dans les archives de la Compagnie de Jésus, à Rome (Archivum Romanum Societatis), qui ne sont peut-être pas, il est vrai, d'un accès trop facile. On pourrait reprocher aussi au livre de M. Pappas une composition assez négligée. Pourquoi insérer l'épisode de la condamnation de la thèse de l'abbé de Prades à propos d'un exposé sur Montesquieu alors qu'il lui faudra revenir sur cette condamnation, avec plus de raison, en discutant les rapports de Berthier avec l'Encyclopédie? Et pourquoi, aussi, incidemment, ne conserve-t-il pas à cette thèse le titre sous lequel elle est généralement connue: *La Jérusalem céleste* ou plus exactement *Jerusalem coelestis questio theologica?* Mais il faut louer M. Pappas d'avoir fait un travail honnête, conscientieux, utile. Il y fait preuve d'une impartialité particulièrement méritoire dans un

sujet où il eût été bien plus facile d'emboîter le pas à Voltaire et d'accabler les jésuites. Nous ne cesserons pas, pour autant, de rire, en lisant la *Relation de la maladie du jésuite Berthier* mais nous saurons que ce Berthier là est un pur fantoche et que le vrai Berthier ne méritait point tous ces sarcasmes.

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FERNAND VIAL

Diderot: Salons. Texte établi et présenté par Jean Seznec et Jean Adhémar. Vol. I: 1759, 1761, 1763. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957. Pp. xvii + 259.

Ce premier volume des *Salons* de Diderot, qui doit être suivi de trois autres, atteste que les éditeurs ont apporté à leur tâche une admirable conscience, et témoigne de leur compétence et maîtrise du sujet. Ainsi qu'il est établi dans la Préface, cette édition a l'avantage sur celle d'Assézat et Tourneux que MM. Seznec et Adhémar se sont servis d'un ensemble plus varié de manuscrits que leurs prédecesseurs. En outre, le présent volume est accompagné d'un appareil critique très complet. Pour la première fois, les textes ont été dûment collationnés, les "corrections" apportées par Grimm ou Vandeuil, soigneusement éliminées, la prose de Diderot, restituée aussi souvent que possible dans sa forme originale. En effet, Grimm et Vandeuil tendaient tous deux à retoucher les expressions empruntées au langage familier ou populaire, à atténuer les vivacités et les exclamations, à biffer les répétitions expressives. Il va sans dire que ce genre de "révision" affaiblit ce qui constitue un élément intégrant du style de Diderot.

Le texte rétabli est présenté dans un cadre instructif de variantes et de notes. Les commentaires que Grimm ne se faisait pas faute d'ajouter, afin de tempérer les saillies de son ami ou d'apporter des "correctifs" aux opinions qu'il n'approuvait pas entièrement, ont également été rétablis. Ces additions, souvent inédites, parce qu'excluses pour une grande part des éditions précédentes, ont pour don de faire ressortir le caractère original et aventureux de la pensée de Diderot.

Les éditeurs ont ajouté à chaque *Salon* une note explicative sur le choix du texte de base et sur les variantes significatives, un excellent historique du Salon, où sont signalées les circonstances de l'exposition et les critiques parues sur celle-ci, ainsi que le *Livret officiel*, copieusement annoté. Ces notes comprennent des résumés biographiques, des indications sur les œuvres, et des aperçus de jugements par des critiques contemporains. A cette fin, quantité d'ouvrages ont été consciencieusement dépouillés, et, dans l'Introduction, on lit un jugement sévère sur ces critiques: "Leur platitude, leur vulgarité, leur suffisance est souvent plus regrettable encore que leur méchanceté" (p. 7). Pourtant, André Fontaine, dans ses *Doctrines d'art en France*, a des choses bien plus positives à dire sur Lafont de Saint-Yenne, l'abbé Le Blanc, Fréron, voire même sur Caylus, cet antiquaire malmené

par le Philosophe.¹ Quoi qu'il en soit, ces amateurs, malgré leur bonne volonté, manquent indubitablement de génie et, en regard de leurs écrits, il n'y a pas de doute que l'éclat de la critique d'art de Diderot se trouve encore renforcé. Par ailleurs, ces résumés d'opinions permettent de mieux évaluer dans quelle mesure les préférences de Diderot reflètent le goût de son époque, et par quels côtés elles résultent d'un choix délibéré, d'une réaction contre les tendances à la mode.

MM. Seznec et Adhémar se sont également assigné la tâche de rechercher les œuvres exposées aux Salons visités par Diderot; tâche certes bien ardue, ces œuvres étant aujourd'hui disséminées dans nombre de collections et pays, et, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit d'artistes presque oubliés, souvent difficiles à retrouver ou complètement disparues. Malgré les indications sommaires (ou le silence total) de Diderot sur certains tableaux, maintes compositions ont été identifiées et reproduites. La manière dont ces renseignements ont été assemblés montre une connaissance approfondie de l'histoire des collections de peintures et de sculptures. Noms de collections importantes, dates de ventes et prix des tableaux, existence de gravures et dessins, lieux où les toiles, gravures et esquisses se trouvent actuellement—si elles ne sont point perdues—rien de ce qui a été jugé pertinent n'est omis de la riche documentation. De ceci il résulte que le spécialiste a à sa portée une foule d'informations qui, auparavant, étaient dispersées et extrêmement difficiles à obtenir. Oserais-je me plaindre de la surabondance des notes et commentaires? Il me semble, en effet, que cette documentation pèche par ses qualités mêmes: elle est fort touffue, et le texte s'en trouve alourdi, rendu quelque peu incommodé à manier pour le lecteur qui n'est pas un spécialiste.

Les reproductions rehaussent le texte et révèlent de manière frappante ce que c'était que la peinture durant la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle. En effet, les albums d'art qui abondent de nos jours ne nous ont accoutumés qu'aux meilleures productions de Chardin, La Tour, Fragonard, Boucher, Hubert Robert, Vernet, Greuze. Mais de la contemplation des tableaux de Restout, La Grenée, Jeaurat, Briard, Pierre, Hallé, le lecteur averti peut aussi tirer une rare leçon esthétique et apprécier la justesse des remontrances de l'Encyclopédiste. Chose curieuse à noter, quelquefois l'œil du spectateur du XX^e siècle se trouve charmé par une toile jugée sévèrement par Diderot, bien qu'elle soit loin d'être un chef-d'œuvre: charme nostalgique, parce que si poétiquement "XVIII^e siècle," de la *Bergère des Alpes* que Vernet exécuta pour Mme Geoffrin (*Salon de 1763*). Par contre, l'enthousiasme que Diderot manifeste dans son *Salon de 1761* pour le *Martyre de Saint André* de Deshayes nous paraît peu justifié lorsque nous examinons cette composition académique et faussement théâtrale. Néanmoins, cette toile, malgré ses défauts, se rapproche de l'idéal dramatique et mouvementé des Baroques italiens et

1. Voir le chapitre "Les Critiques des Salons, les gazettes et les livres," pp. 252-98.

flamands—que Diderot admire—bien plus que tant d'autres morceaux (de Vien, par exemple), qui ne sont plus que du classicisme à l'eau de rose. D'autre part, ces reproductions sont instructives en ce qu'elles mettent en valeur l'indéniable supériorité de Greuze sur la grande majorité des artistes contemporains et, ainsi, expliquent mieux que ne le feraient de longs commentaires l'engouement—d'ailleurs passager—que le Philosophe éprouva pour ce peintre. A côté des compositions froidement académiques, d'une part, avec leurs éternelles scènes mythologiques ou bibliques, et, d'autre part, de l'art rococo, avec son fouillis de bébés joufflus, de guirlandes de fleurs et d'oiseaux, de bergères et de bergers élégants, Greuze, avec ses thèmes populaires et ses personnages tirés de la vie courante, fait figure de novateur. Au demeurant, les excellents portraits de Greuze (celui de Babuti, par exemple, reproduit dans ce volume) attestent que s'il avait moins cherché à émouvoir son public par des moyens extérieurs à la peinture, il eût pu se placer au premier rang... .

En confrontant les reproductions avec les analyses de Diderot, l'on ne peut s'empêcher d'admirer l'exactitude scrupuleuse de ses transpositions verbales, le tour de force qu'il accomplissait en décrivant des centaines de tableaux et de sculptures, et le brillant parti qu'il réussit à tirer de tant d'œuvres médiocres; et tout cela avec le seul recours de sa mémoire et de quelques notes hâties prises au Salon. Il est seulement à regretter que toutes les reproductions soient en noir et blanc. On eût aimé pouvoir examiner, non seulement les schèmes linéaires, mais aussi les valeurs colorées, auxquelles notre salonnier était d'ailleurs si sensible et dont il tenait toujours compte dans ses évaluations.

Dans la première partie de l'*Introduction*, Jean Adhémar retrace l'histoire des expositions officielles au Louvre, explique le rôle du Tapissier, la hiérarchie des exposants, la fonction du livret et analyse brièvement la critique d'art contemporaine. Dans la deuxième partie de l'*Introduction*, Jean Seznec entreprend la tâche peu aisée d'indiquer les procédés de critique et de description utilisés par Diderot, et de résumer les thèmes directeurs de sa critique d'art; tout ceci en respectant les fluctuations des idées et de la sensibilité du Philosophe et l'évolution de son esthétique due à l'enrichissement de ses connaissances plastiques. M. Seznec réussit à suggérer les riches facettes d'une esthétique multiforme, parce que dérivée d'un point de vue expérimental et non soumise à un système *a priori*. Il relève également certains préjugés et conventions académiques, acceptés au XVIII^e siècle, que Diderot devra surmonter avant de pouvoir contempler la peinture avec les yeux *naïfs* de l'artiste et de l'amateur authentique. L'éditeur s'est justement gardé d'avoir recours à ce qu'il qualifie de "formules simples" (p. 21), mais en mettant en relief la diversité des réactions de Diderot, il a laissé dans l'ombre la continuité et les constantes de sa pensée. Après tout, c'est simplifier quelque peu les choses que de renchérir sur l'affirmation du Philosophe qu'il est, "comme nous tous, un peloton de contradictions"

(p. 24). Si, dans cette analyse, les "contradictions" de Diderot se trouvent accusées et sans le bénéfice de commentaires suffisants, si ce qui constitue en fait une progression (quelquefois irrégulière, il est vrai) semble être ici inconstance de vues, ceci est probablement dû au fait qu'il est quasi impossible de circonscrire une personnalité aussi complexe dans les cadres forcément restreints d'une Introduction générale.

En conclusion, exprimons le souhait de voir la publication des trois autres volumes suivre la parution de celui-ci dans un proche avenir, car, complétée, cette édition des *Salons* de Diderot sera la mieux annotée et la plus comprehensive et, de ce fait, ne manquera pas de devenir un instrument indispensable de recherches pour quiconque s'intéresse à l'art français du XVIII^e siècle et à l'esthétique de l'Encyclopédiste.²

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GITA MAY

2. Les éditeurs se sont fait un devoir de respecter scrupuleusement le texte et ont même reproduit les petites inconstances orthographiques de l'auteur. Par exemple, à propos des marines de Vernet, on lit dans le *Salon de 1759*: "Le ciel s'obscurcit; l'éclair s'allume; le tonnerre gronde; la tempête s'élève; les vaisseaux s'embrassent [sic]" (p. 67).

Par ailleurs, nous n'avons relevé qu'un nombre minime de fautes d'impression; une seule mérite d'être signalée: "Y. Delaval" pour "Y. Belaval" (p. 8).

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Introduction to Medieval Latin. By Karl Strecker. Translated by Robert B. Palmer. Berlin: Weidmann, 1957. Pp. 159. Until the present translation, most students have used the latest version of this book available, the French translation by Paul van de Woestijne (Geneva and Lille, 1948). The rapid progress of medieval studies in the past few years requires no excuse for a new translation which is, in addition, an enlargement in bibliography as well as in subjects to be considered. Professor Palmer has, however, felt it necessary to preface his work with a short apology. His reason is curious. He suggests, with some justice, that "too few of our graduate students [...] have mastered the languages of French and German" (p. 5). If this is the case, then one would hardly think them able to cope with medieval Latin, and, as the most cursory glance at the bibliographies included within each chapter indicates, the number of essential works in English dealing with medieval studies is extremely small.

Unlike M. van de Woestijne, Palmer keeps very close to Strecker's German and to his format. This leads to some difficulties in adding bibliographical items within the chapters; furthermore, there is some confusion when Palmer writes "I" (referring to Strecker's own words) and then again to "Karl Strecker." This method also places Palmer's own remarks (which are often quite cogent) under a complete veil of anonymity. Again, his retention of Strecker's remarks on the dilettantism in the editing of medieval texts (p. 14) is a bit unfair; conditions have changed radically since the 1930's.¹ Like the French edition, Palmer's has an index of names, but in addition, he includes a valuable subject index. Although the book was only issued in 1957, Palmer indicates that his bibliography has only a few items after 1955, the date when his MS was completed.

The most valuable parts of this book for the researcher are the sections on texts, translations, periodicals, medieval libraries, text transmission, palaeography, and photostats and microfilms (pp. 105-59). In these areas, especially the last three, Palmer has given the student one of the best guides to finding and obtaining original documents. His remarks on the development of medieval libraries are excellent; but he should have indicated that there is much work to be done in the future, as he does when he pleads for some medievalist to undertake a survey of the literature of the twelfth century and following (p. 100).

In a bibliography of so wide and rich a field it is not surprising that there are some omissions. Palmer should have known of the fourth edition of E. Norden's *Römische Literatur*, (Leipzig, 1952). He seems to have added nothing to Strecker's bibliography on medieval Renaissances (p. 35). Much work has been done in this field in recent years; just to mention one of the best articles: E. Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," *Kenyon Review*, VI (1944), 201-35. Palmer does full justice to Cassiodorus in regarding him as responsible for the copying of MSS, but he has slighted him in the bibliography (p. 121, n. 1). There are several more im-

1. In referring to K. Langosch (pp. 12, 13, n. 1), Palmer notes that he slighted the work of Ludwig Traube, the true founder of modern medieval studies. I think that Professor Palmer in all fairness should have made the obvious remark that the political leanings of Langosch after 1933 prevented him from praising the work of a Jew. This makes Langosch's work much more suspect. Imagine a history of psychiatry with little mention of Freud!

portant items than those he has included: A. van de Vyver, "Cassiodore et son œuvre," *Speculum*, VI (1931), 244-92, and A. Momigliano, "Cassiodorus and the Italian Culture of his Time," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XLI (1955), 207-45, with a most extensive bibliography.

The sections concerned with word formation, prosody, pronunciation, orthography, morphology, and syntax (pp. 46-68) could have been omitted. Most of it is taken over directly from Strecker, and his work is outdated. There are many handbooks available which would serve the purpose better than this sketch (e.g., A. Blaise, *Manuel du latin chrétien* [Strasbourg, 1955], mentioned by Palmer, p. 23, n. 3). Vocabulary lists of words out of context are perfectly useless to a student, and many of Strecker's examples would be obvious to one who was reading a particular text (e.g., *abbatissa*: abbess).

The section on palaeography might be somewhat misleading (p. 136). E. Maunde Thompson's book is hardly the best one in English; it is both out of print and out of date. Its main value remains in the numerous facsimiles. The Oxford University Press is preparing a series of monographs to replace Thompson. Until the Latin sections appear, I suggest a book with a rather misleading title: N. Denholm-Young, *Handwriting in England and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1954). This book covers a much wider area than the title indicates, and is excellent, though brief, on the history of palaeography, the localization of MSS, and the dating of hands.

As a whole this new version is of value, but only in so far as it supplements Strecker and Woestijne. A great deal of it could have been omitted, which might have reduced to some extent the rather exorbitant price charged by Weidmann for what is, after all, only a paper-back book. For those who want a quick survey of medieval Latin and are not especially concerned with the latest developments (and Palmer's work is rapidly becoming outdated itself), the French version at one-third the cost is just as good. (JAMES W. HALPORN, *Columbia University*)

Le Roman de Renard. Par Robert Bossuat. (*Connaissance des Lettres*, No. 49). Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1957. Pp. 189. Professor Bossuat's handbook on the *Roman de Renard* is divided into eight chapters: "La Tradition manuscrite," "Les Branches de Renard," "Précurseurs du *Roman de Renard*," "Origines et sources," "La Peinture des personnages," "La Parodie et la satire," "L'Art et le style," "La Survivance de Renard," and a Conclusion.

The thirty-odd poems or—to use the Old-French term—branches which constitute the *Renard* are found in three different MS collections, α , β , and γ . Méon published a γ text, Martin selected an α MS, and the Cangé MS (Paris, BN, f. fr. 371), a β MS, is presently being edited by Mario Roques. Once the Roques edition is completed, it will be possible to undertake a critical edition based on all twenty or so MSS of the *Renard*, and only then, says Bossuat, will we be able to attempt anything like a final study of the cycle. Meanwhile, he feels that Lucien Foulet's *le Roman de Renard* (Paris, 1914) still provides us with our best guide for a chronological ordering of the various branches, a satisfying explanation of their interrelationships, and an understanding of the genesis and development of the *Renard* poems.¹

1. In his bibliography, Bossuat draws attention to an interesting and fairly recent article by Pierre Jonin: "Les Animaux et leur vie psychologique dans le *Roman de Renart* (branche I)," *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres d'Aix*, XXV (1951), 63-82.

Connaissance des Lettres (formerly *Le Livret de l'Etudiant*) has a threefold purpose: acquaint the university student with an author or a literary work, stimulate the interest of the cultured reader, crystallize the thinking of specialists in a given field or period. Bossuat has envisaged his *étudiant* and cultured reader as not too well versed in Old French, a correct assumption in most cases. For them he has written a very clear and informative book, in which every branch is represented by an analysis of its contents and an estimate of its literary value, with occasional excerpts and suitable renderings.²

For the third category, that of the specialists, Bossuat has less to offer, not surprisingly so in a handbook. He ascribes the great drop in popularity of the *Renard* during the latter part of the Middle Ages to the Hundred Years War, but without doing much more than pointing out the coincidence (p. 167). On page 171, he attempts to define Renard's appeal to Frenchmen of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: "Le roi Noble et ses barons, dans une cour soumise à l'étiquette, forment l'élite d'un état hiérarchisé, fondé sur des principes éprouvés et qui semblent défier le temps. Bien conseillé par ses fidèles, le souverain s'attache à maintenir la paix intérieure, à faire respecter les lois et les coutumes, à conserver l'équilibre entre les ambitions rivales. Tout irait bien si Renard le rebelle ne se dressait contre l'ordre établi." Elsewhere (Jean Calvet, *Histoire de la littérature française*, I, 117), Bossuat has been more specific and more original: "Personnage aux aspects multiples, comme en enfantera Rabelais, d'une souplesse à toute épreuve, prêt à flétrir provisoirement devant la force, pour préparer dans le secret la revanche de la ruse, gardant toujours, quand tout paraît perdu, un dernier tour dans son sac, Renart est le peuple de France, hardi, frondeur, souvent indiscipliné et dont l'ardeur exubérante fait craquer les traditions. Malgré ses torts, son impudence, ses révoltes et ses méfaits, il oppose spirituellement la force de l'intelligence au rempart des droits acquis et des prescriptions garanties par les siècles." Leo Spitzer (*Archivum Romanicum*, XLIII, (1940), 214, n. 5) has lauded an interpretation of Renard's symbolism which brings his name together with those of Panurge and Figaro.³

Quite possibly there exists a permanent strain in the French character which blends a rebellious inclination with a sentiment of superiority derived from a jesting attitude toward society and life. At various times this tendency finds its perfect embodiment in a literary figure. The unity of the *Roman de Renard*, despite the diversity and divergencies of its many branches, is to be found not only in the corpus- or collection-type manuscripts which assemble them in material fashion, but also, and perhaps especially so, in the deep, hidden appeal, which Renard, the amiable, amusing, witty rebel held for all classes of society in the days of Philip Augustus and Saint Louis.⁴ (ALFRED FOULET, Princeton University)

Corneille par lui-même. Par Louis Herland. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1956. Pp. 190; *Pierre Corneille, dramaturge.* Par Bernard Dort. Paris: L'Arche, 1957. Pp. 156.

2. I have caught only one factual error (on p. 156): the sovereign whom Philippe de Novare calls Noble in one of his propaganda poems is the child king of Cyprus, Henry I, not the Emperor Frederick II.

3. Sainte-Beuve has adumbrated this interpretation, *Causeries du lundi*. 3rd ed., VIII, 281.

4. Pantagruel likes the rascally Panurge, Almaviva is amused by the impudence of Figaro, and Noble cannot help being drawn to his unconventional vassal.

Though they offer the lure of shortness and present themselves primarily as *esquisses*, it would be inadvisable for the student of Corneille (particularly the graduate student boning up for "orals") to regard the theses and assumptions of these books as so much "ground gained" in Corneille studies. They are both tendentious (the Dort in the extreme), and their assumptions are matters of serious discussion as to method and approach.

One might begin by questioning the propriety of presenting the imaginative works of a literary artist as contributions to his self-portrait. Particularly only extracts from the work. Even more particularly extracts from the drama, generally acknowledged to be the most objective of literary forms. But this is the subject of another discussion and one in which it would have to be granted that a work of art, if autonomous, is not self-created, that it is the result of a human experience in this world and that this experience, though subject to the most subtle transmutations, is "reflected" in the work. The quarrel with M. Herland (whose book is a re-issue of the 1954 edition) begins with the angle from which he looks at the "reflections" in the mirror of the work. In each section of his three part edition (a commented chronology of Corneille's life, a long personal essay, a series of extracts) he dubiously proceeds from unknown or imperfectly known causes to "known" effects, that is from the portrait to the works. (M. Herland's psychological bias can already be anticipated in his preliminary summary of recent Corneille research: he commends highly circumstantial approaches like those of Adam, Couton, et al., but has only stinting praise for Nadal and fails to mention May's capital study of classical dramaturgy, *Tragédie cornélienne, tragédie racinienne* [Urbana, 1948].) Thus, the data of the marriage of Corneille's sister, Marie, becomes the occasion for Herland (p. 13) to see in this sister "peut-être son modèle pour les rôles, si réussis, de jeune sœur espionnée et spirituelle qui se trouve dans *Méline*, *La Veuve*, *La Place Royale* (et dont quelque chose se retrouvera encore dans le personnage de Camille)" (p. 13). And under the entry 1651: "Décembre: date probable de la première de *Pertharite*, tragédie d'un roi détroné, inspirée sans doute par les événements d'Angleterre et par la récente odyssée de jeune Charles II s'efforçant de reconquérir son trône" (p. 26). The "reflections" are apparently casual (*peut-être, sans doute*) and the schematic demands of a chronology do force an equivalence between event and work which the nuances of an essay might place in an entirely different light.

However, M. Herland's essay on Corneille only stiffens the biases of his comments in the chronology. Not that he reconstructs the biography of Corneille. He is too knowing for that—or does not know enough. After a series of rhetorical questions about what we know of Corneille's personal life, he himself concludes "il vaut mieux renoncer à percer ces ténèbres" (p. 56). As to the possibility that the "drames de famille [...] dont foisonne son théâtre, doivent quelque chose à son expérience personnelle de la vie familiale: il a pu aussi bien les observer chez d'autres" (p. 56). Yet this is not the objectivity of the literary critic, but the regretful (though honest, to be sure) frustration of the literary biographer. For if the facts are too few for a thorough biography (are they ever complete enough?), inferences from the few known personal facts combined with examples from the plays themselves can give the next best thing for the critic essentially interested in the man and not the works: a portrait. Thus, from the facts of *le personnage social* (descent, station, career, marriage, etc.) and the substance of the plays Herland draws the portrait

of a Corneille in whom the "appétit de grandeur [est] si souvent contrarié [...] par l'humble bon sens du bourgeois" (p. 100). The texts which Herland presents in support of the second half of this portrait are scanty indeed (even here, he relies too much on the formulaic submissiveness of dedicatory prefaces). But even granting them as much validity as he does, one can object that he fails to develop the very fruitful contradiction which is the essential aspect of the portrait he draws: the works stand not as an expression of the life, but as a compensatory refutation of it. Here we border on the theme of pessimism in Corneille which Nadal and others have hinted at. Of course, Herland does consider the theme for awhile, but he is far more interested in portraying a patriotic and religious Corneille humbly serving his God and his master, while honorably, happily and profitably pursuing his careers of lawyer and dramatist. It is essentially this latter image which the extracts (drawn mostly from the personal writings, prefaces, essays, occasional verses, etc.) in the third part of the book are designed to give under such rubrics as *Un Homme qui a les pieds sur la terre*, *Un Disciple de Montaigne*, *Le Prêtre de Louis*, *Un Grand Peintre d'histoire*, *Le Poète chrétien*, etc.

With these circumstantial extracts, as with the conjectures of his commented chronology and the inferences of his word-portrait, Herland remains on the periphery of the great plays themselves. That he need not—at least in his essay—he himself indicates in the imaginative filiations he frequently suggests between Corneille and other writers of French literature: Hugo, Voltaire, Anatole France, Gide, et al. Happily, Herland recognizes that these rapprochements are not matters of influence but of spiritual resemblances. Even so, he typically relates only the external situations of these writers to Corneille (and occasionally goes awry in his comparisons, as with Verlaine and Rimbaud). But this exclusion is a matter of critical focus and not sheer blindness, and it is to be hoped that critics taking a different focus will develop more meaningfully the happy rapprochements M. Herland has made.

If Herland's very title fills the student of drama with a sense of perplexity, Dort's *Pierre Corneille, dramaturge* fills him with a sense of hope and excitement. These high hopes no doubt account in part for the great sense of disappointment which results from reading a book which is more properly a study of *Pierre Corneille, sociologue*. For, instead of leading us through a study of the elements of structure (event, character, theme, etc.) which his title promises, M. Dort marches us through the plays as they tick off the various phases of the power struggle among French political factions in the middle years of the seventeenth century. (An appendix on "Eléments pour une scénographie" is likewise a misnomer, being a sketchy history of troupes which have played Corneille in the last four centuries). As Dort sees it, *l'officier Corneille*, essentially a "bourgeois fasciné par la noblesse," traces in his theater the historical collapse of his class's hope for a balanced state in which the king would mediate among the various contending factions (bourgeoisie, nobles, etc.). But, in a supreme irony, the king assumed full power ("L'Etat, c'est moi!"), thus betraying *l'officier Corneille*, who then returned pessimistically to his earliest loyalties, to the conception of a transcendent hero co-equal if not superior to the king. However, confronted with the entrenched monarchy, Corneille, ever the historical realist, now dedicates his hero to self-assertion by death, that is, to a rejection of history.

The thesis is vital, exciting, gripping. It responds, in our ideology-ridden age,

to a deeply felt need among men of letters to believe that, like their colleagues in the social sciences (and, since Sputnik, in the sciences), they are dealing with reality in its rawest form: the clash of power interests in the political sphere. Yet, the thirst for reality should not blind us to the profound esthetic, psychological and moral issues which are at stake when we approach works of art as social and political documents. Unfortunately, M. Dort seems unaware of any other issues than the political, and even here he depends too readily upon the erudition of others (notably, of Couton and Goldmann and—less frankly—of Bénichou) without emulating their modesty and subtlety. Of course, M. Dort pretends to discuss no other issue in his study of Corneille. All the more reason then for the literary critic to wonder if it is Corneille that he is writing about. Not that the alternative to his political approach must, as he implies, be a jejune exegesis (apparently a dirty word) of dramatic techniques or word frequencies. The literary critic is not by definition precluded from discussing what M. Dort would call themes. But the themes are the themes of literature (modes of feeling, relationship between appearance and reality, etc.). Of course, being an artist and not a philosopher, Corneille must write *about* something—or more precisely, *with* something—which will embody these themes. Thus, the politics of his plays, far from being the sum and substance of the art of the most consciously artistic French playwright, are simply the scaffolding upon which he elaborates specifically literary themes. To take one example, on the imbroglio of personal relationships in *Héraclius*, M. Dort writes: "Leur fonction essentielle, c'est [plutôt] de traduire, sur le plan dramaturgique, la panique, le désordre profond qui ravagent l'Etat cornélien" (p. 67). And not, in the implications of Corneille's preface which M. Dort cites only to reject, to create marvelous effects of suspense and surprise in this, his most inventive manipulation of the theme of appearance and reality?

There is, of course, a danger that the significance of such themes will be limited to the "merely literary." Ultimately, every work of art must be evaluated in moral terms—as we are reminded even by T. S. Eliot, the progenitor of the "literary" bias from which the present reviewer assesses these books. What remains at issue, then, is how or when we get to moral considerations: before or after the work. Now, Messrs. Herland and Dort do have the work in mind, thanks to a long-established educational practice, *explication de texte*. And though one senses a certain impatience on M. Dort's part with the presumed "simplicities" of textual analysis, it is clear that what he is really objecting to is the more or less official portrait of Corneille as a *bon bourgeois patriote et chrétien*, which, in fact, M. Herland makes it his business to paint. This he would replace with his own portrait of *Corneille, l'Héautontimorouménos politique*. Yet, though they know the work, Messrs. Herland and Dort do so only in terms of some pre-established *race, milieu et moment*. For, in spite of its resemblances to the techniques of anglo-saxon "New Criticism", *explication de texte* differs diametrically in its use of the work as the demonstration of an assumed conceptual framework. That M. Dort's framework is Marxist is not the issue here—nor is the submerged conservative politics-plus-theology of the "New Critics." What is at issue is the assumption of a conceptual framework *before* the analysis of the work itself. Both Messrs. Herland and Dort are right in believing that the work of art does not exist in a biographical or historical vacuum—but it exists even less in the straitjackets of psychological patterns or ideological frameworks. (ROBERT J. NELSON, Yale University)

La Poétique de La Fontaine: Deux Études. Par Georges Couton. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957. Pp. 38. Les deux études que Monsieur Couton a réunies sous le titre *La Poétique de La Fontaine* ne justifient pas tout à fait ce titre. Mais l'auteur est le premier à suggérer qu' "une poétique des *Fables* reste à écrire" et le lecteur se doute bien qu'une publication d'une quarantaine de pages ne saurait prétendre en ce domaine qu'à avertir, informer ou préciser. C'est ce que fait M. Couton avec une concision qui ne fait que donner plus de prix aux conclusions apportées.

Les recherches de l'auteur ont porté sur les traités d'emblèmes, nombreux aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles, et sur les rhétoriques employées dans les collèges du XVII^e siècle.

Dans la première étude, "La Fontaine et l'art des emblèmes," nous apprenons que le Père Ménestrier, de la compagnie de Jésus, désirant dans son ouvrage, *L'Art des emblèmes*, illustrer le genre moral, choisit deux exemples dans les *Fables*, choix significatif. Normalement, l'emblème offre trois parties: "La peinture, le mot, les vers." Il faut prendre "peinture" au sens concret d'image peinte ou gravée. L'emblème est donc la représentation graphique d'une scène dont la légende, "le mot," précise la portée morale. "Les vers" expliquent l'image mais ne sauraient en être dissociés. Cet examen permet à M. Couton de tirer certaines conclusions qui nous paraissent nouvelles et fort utiles à qui étudie de près les *Fables*. La gravure y "passe pour ainsi dire dans le texte même," dit l'auteur. Peut-être se laisse-t-il entraîner un peu loin par son sujet lorsqu'il affirme qu'on a pu "sans qu'il cessât jamais d'être clair, rééditer La Fontaine sans les gravures." La Fontaine écrivait des fables, non des emblèmes, suivait Esopo, Phèdre, Pilpay qui, pas plus que lui n'ont besoin d'illustrations. Toutefois cette insistance, et je m'étonne que M. Couton ne le fasse pas remarquer au passage, permettra de donner l'attention qu'ils méritent aux divers illustrateurs de La Fontaine qui de Chauveau à Doré et Chagall, en passant par Eisen et bien d'autres, ont comme justifié à l'avance l'étude qui nous occupe.

M. Couton suggère donc une révision des sources des *La Fontaine* et il a certainement raison de nous engager à interroger "toute une littérature parfaitement oubliée." Il prouve lui-même par l'exemple de ses recherches le profit qu'il y a à sortir des sentiers battus. En effet il a étudié non seulement le Père Ménestrier, mais les *Emblemata* d'Alciat parues au XVI^e siècle et réimprimées jusqu'à la fin du XVII^e siècle, l'*Hécatomographie* de Gilles Corrozet, les *Emblèmes* de Guillaume Guérout et la traduction en vers par Barthélémy Aneau des *Emblemata* d'Alciat. Il retrace ainsi toute une tradition qui relie les bestiaires et Ysopets du Moyen Age à la *Mythologia Aesopica* de Névelet, parue en 1610, et aux "fables héroïques" d'Audin dont M. Couton serait étonné que La Fontaine n'eût pas eu connaissance. Il passe ensuite en revue divers auteurs de fables, Patru, Mme de Villedieu, Furetière, qui conservent le "goût de l'explication allégorique," et en arrive au dernier point de sa première étude: "Survivances de l'emblème dans les *Fables* de La Fontaine."

Malgré de nombreux exemples, fort bien choisis, on a peine à se laisser convaincre que La Fontaine ait pu emprunter presque un système de composition de la fable aux auteurs d'emblèmes. Les "longs développements à tendance morale" que l'on trouve dans les *Fables* aussi bien que chez Baudoin et Alciat et qui commencent souvent par la même formule, "Je crois voir en ceci l'image . . ." autorisent à

reconnaître un héritage. Mais voir de l'ingratitude dans le silence que La Fontaine a gardé sur ces devanciers peut sembler excessif. Le silence du fabulistre sur les auteurs d'emblèmes n'indiquerait-il pas tout simplement qu'il s'agit là d'une influence secondaire à laquelle l'admirateur de Platon, le successeur d'Esope et de Phédre, toujours si prompt à reconnaître sa dette envers eux n'a pas jugé bon de s'arrêter? L'importance reste essentielle de ces œuvres oubliées. Elles constituent, comme le dit M. Couton lui-même "une étape sans laquelle le passage de la fable éopique à la fable de La Fontaine se comprend mal."

La seconde étude intitulée "Du pensum aux *Fables*" est peut-être moins enrichissante. L'on connaît la *Ratio studiorum* des Jésuites, les *Flores latinitatis* où les très jeunes élèves apprenaient la rhétorique et la prosodie, où ils empruntaient les tours élégants de leurs discours ou poèmes latins. Plus âgés, ils devaient développer en une "amplificatio" l'"argumentum" donné par le maître. Le sujet, souvent moral, se prêtait à être développé sous forme de fable. On exerçait les élèves aux styles simple, orné, rude, soigné ou fleuri.

L'auteur fait une étude précise de l'"amplificatio" telle que la concevaient les Jésuites, et, revenant à La Fontaine, démontre qu'il est resté fidèle à ces méthodes de collège, "qu'il est arrivé à la poésie par les voies étroites de la rhétorique."

Il analyse le vocabulaire critique de La Fontaine, ce qui paraît essentiel. L'interprétation en particulier du terme "circonstances" est très intéressante. Celle du terme "ornements" gagnerait à être nuancée davantage. M. Couton ne suggère pas, et c'est regrettable, que ces mots précis sont comme soumis chez La Fontaine à des expressions plus générales, celles de "sentiment," de "goût," de "bienséance," de "charme" de "naturel," qui restent à analyser.

Sachons gré à M. Couton d'avoir évité la terminologie facile qu'emploient trop souvent encore les critiques du poète le plus difficile qui soit. Nous avons plaisir à ne pas lire: "notre fabulistre" ou "l'exquis La Fontaine." Ces études qui témoignent d'un énorme travail d'érudition se recommandent au lecteur par l'élégante gravité de leur style autant que par la clarté des conclusions apportées.

L'auteur de ces pages reconnaît que "le génie reste en définitive inexplicable." Mais il a certainement "réduit la marge de l'inexplicable." (RENÉE J. KOHN, *Barnard College*)

Molière par lui-même. Par Alfred Simon. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957. Pp. 192. The fortieth volume of the *Ecrivains de toujours* series is Alfred Simon's *Molière par lui-même*, a compact little volume, one half of which is devoted to pictures: reproductions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century illustrations and photographs of some of the most outstanding twentieth-century interpreters of Molière's characters, such as Jouvet, Barrault, Vilar. The reader has before him a kaleidoscopic presentation of Molieriana which is sometimes distracting but which aims sincerely to bring to life Molière's theatre as few other studies on Molière have done. Molière's plays, however, like those of most dramatists, cannot live between the covers of a book; they must come to life behind footlights, even though the various conceptions of producer, director and actor may misinterpret the author. For three hundred years we have had various interpretations of the characters and of the ideas in the plays. When it comes to the man, however, whether we consider him as actor, director, author or private person, we cannot be so certain that we know him, even though a recognizable individual comes through some of the lines. Had

the seventeenth century possessed our twentieth-century techniques, we should know today what Molière looked like, how he acted, what his voice and his famous "toux" were, and still the entire person behind the make-up would always escape us. For who can say that a dramatist is this or that character in his plays—he is all of them and he is none of them.

Simon's attempt to present us a "Molière par lui-même" is as arbitrary as any other biography, beginning with the "préface biographique" of the 1682 edition or the Grimarest *Vie de Monsieur de Molière* of 1705 and ending with the most recent interpretations by such men as Fernandez, Brisson, Jouvet, Bray or Audiberti. Simon takes to task all critics who have created the Molière legend: those who see Molière as a romantic, dramatizing his own personal experiences, or those who attempt to divorce the man from the works, and particularly those "universitaires" who make Molière fit into a pattern which can be easily classified for course examinations. Simon is right in scoring these interpreters.

But he himself falls into the same trap. He states that he wishes to "rêver un certain Molière qui échappe à l'histoire et à la littérature" (p. 20). Here, instead of concentrating on ideas and characters in Molière, he aims to give an "analyse des thèmes, moins arrogante et plus féconde" (p. 19). He dreams of Molière as the representative bourgeois. For him Chrysale of *Les Femmes savantes* is more representative of Molière than the Chrysale of *L'Ecole des femmes* or all the other *raisonneurs* whom tradition has made the mouthpieces of Molière's thoughts. He sees Molière "derrière les différents masques d'un seul et unique fantôme" (p. 48). His arguments are well marshaled, especially since they are presented in short and detached sections. This reviewer is not persuaded, however, by the evidence. Behind each bourgeois there is the character in the play who reacts to the situation in the play and to the other characters who make him live. He is first and foremost an individual, and though he may share some of Molière's opinions, he is not "Molière par lui-même." Perhaps one of Simon's most suspect allegations is to deny Molière the knowledge of love and passion. Molière's analysis of the overpowering passion that love can be (whether in Arnolphe, Alceste, Cléante or even in the host of young lovers who form the backbone of Molière's plots), ranks with that of Racine or Mme de La Fayette in conviction.

Most of the analyses of themes are acute and interesting. Simon does perhaps devote too much space to his study of Don Juan. He recognizes the fact that the play was not Molière's favorite (Molière certainly did not remain faithful to it as he did to *Le Tartuffe*) and that in the last hundred years it has been infrequently produced. He reads into it, though, as Jouvet did in his magnificent but personal interpretation, our modern conception of evil. I have no quarrel with this insistence on the modernness of a great play, but it is not all of Molière, just as *Le Misanthrope* is not the sole representative of Molière's genius, though it is the most elusive. Similarly Scapin is not necessarily the Hamlet of Farce, as Simon views him. To see him as treacherous as Tartuffe, as demoniac as Don Juan, as solitary as Alceste, is making one of Molière's most scintillating creations, the perfect *fourbum Imperator*, who exists for the sheer pleasure of existing, into an existentialist hero whose "clin d'œil ne va pas au public mais à Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, dit Molière auquel il fixe un prompt rendez-vous" (p. 145).

In order to present Molière "défini par lui-même," Simon devotes the last forty pages of his book to pure fantasy, entitled *L'Impromptu de Molière*, in which "Mo-

lière parle par la bouche de ses personnages" (p. 148). Isolated speeches, taken out of context, are juxtaposed to make Molière say what he perhaps would never have said about himself or about life and his own society. This is the least convincing part of his interpretation.

Molière par lui-même adds another interpretation to the already bulky and impressive Molière bibliography. It is good reading; it is provocative; and all lovers of Molière, be they students, professors, scholars, actors, directors or just plain lovers of the theatre, should read it and decide for themselves whether Molière can ever be "défini par lui-même." (PAUL SAINTONGE, Mount Holyoke College)

Port-Royal entre le miracle et l'obéissance: Flavie Passart et Angélique de St-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly. Par Jean Orcibal. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957. Pp. 197. M. Orcibal whose monumental works have renewed the study of Jansenism now brings his admirable scholarship to bear on a crisis in the annals of Port-Royal and on two conflicting personalities involved in this tragedy, two beings so different from each other that he remarks: "On pouvait juger absurde de rapprocher les deux noms d'importances très inégales que les hasards biographiques ont associés, puis opposés" (p. 109). Yet since Flavie stands for certain tendencies at Port-Royal, in spite of her idiosyncrasies, an explanation of her conduct on the eve of the great separation is as important as an appreciation of Angélique's leadership. The formulay condemning the five propositions said to be in the *Augustinus* had been put before the nuns of Port-Royal. Angélique Arnauld d'Andilly, the famous niece of the great Angélique, refused to sign and was virtually imprisoned for a time in another convent, sharing the fate of others who had resisted, nevermore to return to Port-Royal de Paris. For a space, Port-Royal des Champs was to be the home of those who stood by their convictions. On the other hand, Flavie Passart, a distant cousin of Racine, signed and remained at Port-Royal de Paris, rewarded by important charges. For long she had held out against signing when suddenly, in September 1664, she passed over to the other side, a "hypocrite," a veritable "Judas" in the eyes of her contemporaries. Only a devastating ambition, it was said, could account for such treachery.

Sainte-Beuve dismisses Flavie in a few lines. M. Orcibal who has consulted with all necessary caution Angélique's unpublished *Information de la vie et des miracles de Sœur Flavie*, is the first to investigate "le cas Flavie" and to give a penetrating analysis of her personality in terms of modern psychology and Le Senne's characterology. He shows her to us, a victim of her temperament, "une énigme psychophysique" in her marked instability, afflicted with strange maladies for which she sought miraculous cures through the intercession of Port-Royal saints, a creature of prophetic dreams and visions, morbidly sensitive, unbalanced, lonely and frustrated, craving affection and esteem, the prey of a deep inferiority-complex, for, the daughter of a tanner of La Ferté-Milon, she was of humble origin, limited in every way, lacking in knowledge and culture. Her isolation and insecurity ultimately found relief in obedience to her ecclesiastical superiors and in the recognition which followed her signature. And what of Angélique Arnauld d'Andilly, known to us from a remarkable portrait by Sainte-Beuve, and from her own extraordinarily interesting *Relation de captivité* which, not long ago, M. Cognet made available to us again, Angélique, the heroine of Montherlant's play? M. Orcibal's study of her is very revealing. If Flavie is a *hystérique* Angélique is a *passionnée*. He notes her aristocratic

cratic distinction, her intellectualism, characteristic of the second generation of Port-Royal, her reserve and aloofness, her aversion to praise, her iron will and outstanding ability, even a certain strong-minded, cool, domineering hardness, all those factors which inevitably brought about a clash with Flavie. And therein lies one important aspect of the book. "La crise de 1664 [...] ne pouvait pas être mieux expliquée que par l'étude des causes qui opposèrent longtemps [...] Flavie Passart et Angélique de Saint-Jean" (p. 128). But underneath Angélique's highstrung self-control and surface indifference to affection, M. Orcibal discerns the melancholy, the vulnerability, the anguish of her struggles, that make her seem less remote from Flavie. The same is true in another respect. *Port-Royal entre le miracle et l'obéissance*: while Angélique was the incarnation of resistance to that spirit of blind obedience which characterized Flavie and the new Port-Royal de Paris, Angélique's attitude to prophecies, dreams, and miracles was less clear-cut. Contemptuous of some of Flavie's doubtful miracles, nevertheless, through some curious contradiction in her character, she shared the growing tendency of Port-Royal to invoke miracles in support of conduct and to see in them directive approbation as well as manifestation of divine will. "On pria Dieu," relates a nun in speaking of the cure of the painter Champaigne's daughter, Sœur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne, "que s'il avait agréable la disposition où nous étions et que ce fut sa volonté que nous ne signassions point, il lui plût nous la faire connaître en la guérissant" (p. 148). According to M. Orcibal, Port-Royal had ceased to provide that boon which Jacqueline Pascal, disdainful of superstition, had come to seek there, "le moyen d'être religieuse raisonnablement" (p. 120).

Occasional contacts with Pascal, Racine and Bossuet add to the interest of this work. It was Flavie, it will be remembered, who caused Pascal's niece to touch her eye with the relic of *la Sainte-Épine*. The appendices contain unpublished letters from Flavie, and an account of Sœur Marie-Gabrielle Houel whose unpublished "encyclical" on Port-Royal miracles is also given with illuminating comments. The twenty-eight pages of notes that follow the text are very valuable and give some idea of the solid substructure on which this remarkable study is based. The author draws on a wealth of MS material, preserved at the Bibliothèque de Port-Royal, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Mazarine and archives in Holland. His authoritative interpretation of these documents must be consulted for an understanding of the circumstances that led to the separation of Port-Royal des Champs and Port-Royal de Paris. It is an important contribution to the history of the second Port-Royal, markedly different in some of its tendencies from the Port-Royal of Saint-Cyrane, Singlin, and the first Angélique. (RUTH E. CLARK, *Winchester, Massachusetts*)

Le Maistre de Sacy et son temps. Par Geneviève Delassault. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1957. Pp. 306. This is an honest, admirable thesis for the Doctorat-ès-Lettres. Any of us would be proud to have written it, to have supervised it; gladly would we award it an A-plus, a summa cum laude, a *mention très honorable*. Dr. Delassault's bibliography is enormous. She has read everything in print; she has excerpted a mass of *inédit* in collections in Paris, Port-Royal, Rouen, Troyes, Chantilly, Amiens, Grenoble, Geneva, and especially The Hague. She knows Latin well, and can weigh the poetic merits of alternative renderings from Terence and sacred psalmologists. She has much to tell even the specialist. (I thought her chapters on *la Libre Pensée et la Bible*, *les Rationalistes et la Bible*, *la Bible et la magie*, particularly enlightening).

The student of Pascal and of Racine will find in these pages a useful view of their subjects in the perspective of Port-Royal. Dr. Delassault's judgments are reasonable; despite her affection for the Jansenist group, she refrains from blind partisanship. For instance, her account of the *libertin* arguments against the inerrancy of the Scriptures is entirely fair, and very well informed. She has, in short, given us the story of Port-Royal, in the stirring years from about 1646 to 1680, with Le Maistre de Sacy thrust somewhat uncomfortably into the limelight.

To the thesis, then, we can accord only praise. But the thesis has become a book. When a thesis becomes a book, it is born to life in the world. It ventures to move and live and be; it asserts that its author (or some Author) has breathed into it a soul. And those who were kindest toward the embryonic thesis may turn upon and even devour the tender, tottering Book.

The book suffers from an intrinsic flaw. The fact is, Le Maistre de Sacy was not a very interesting person. He was a background figure, a secondary Jansenist, overshadowed by Saint-Cyran, Singlin, Arnauld, Nicole, Mère Angélique. He is a blurred face in the back row, a little dim, *un peu falot*. He had every virtue, and no sins. No doubt his soul shone very bright in God's sight, but God has no need to read this book. A few sins, or even faults, would have been welcomed by the earthly reader. Le Père Rapin well described him: "C'était un esprit doux, paisible, éloigné de toutes sortes de contestations que Saci, qui, pour éviter d'entrer dans la controverse de la nouvelle opinion, s'attacha aux traductions."

A book about an uninteresting person may be justified, if the uninteresting person has done interesting deeds. Many a dull fellow has made an indelible mark on history. But what, after all, did Le Maistre de Sacy do? He translated Phaedrus, Terence, some hymns, the *Imitation*, and he crowned his career with a translation of the Bible. He wrote some minor polemics in the Jansenist war. He was Director of the Solitaires and of the nuns of Port-Royal. He had personal relations with many greater than himself. But on the whole, there seems to be no real need for a first Life and Times, nearly three hundred years after his death.

Of course, an author can, by art, breathe life into such a secondary figure and thus capture and reward the reader. Dr. Delassault has not, I fear, done so. She has recorded and weighed evidence, sought sources and influences, listed the merits and demerits of her subject's work. But she gives no clear impression of his character, and no final estimate of his importance. Even her brief concluding chapter, in which she had an opportunity to make her claims for her hero, trails off into a discussion of his views on the direction of souls. One gets a clearer picture of Le Maistre de Sacy's living presence in Fontaine's *Mémoires* (not to mention Sainte-Beuve) than in this ample volume. Fontaine tells, for example, a charming anecdote of Antoine Lemaistre's ravenous consumption of his fasting pittance, while Le Maistre de Sacy peels a quarter apple, eats with ironic deliberation, and leaves a morsel on his plate. Dr. Delassault omits the anecdote, no doubt because it is trivial, and she must get on to her scholarly business. Well, trivial the story may be, but for this reader it works as magic, bringing to life a man who remains, through most of Dr. Delassault's book, a ghost.

But I don't want to end by strictures on this praiseworthy study. It is not, obviously, for the general reader. (I know only one surviving general reader, and he has cataracts). It is for the *Amis de Port-Royal*, who already know all the actors well, and who like to watch the drama endlessly played over, with variations. How

many such are there in this country? Ten? Five? (MORRIS BISHOP, Cornell University)

Marivaux: La Vie de Marianne. Texte établi, avec introduction, chronologie, bibliographie, notes et glossaire par Frédéric Deloffre. Paris: Garnier, 1957. Pp. cvii + 654. The rejuvenated *Classiques Garnier* collection is turning out an increasing number of critical editions which vie in scholarly value with those of the *Société des Textes français modernes* or the *Textes littéraires français*. We had the editions of Stendhal by H. Martineau and Y. Le Hir's Choderlos de Laclos; now Deloffre gives us the long needed edition of *La Vie de Marianne*. For the first time since 1748 students and researchers have at their disposal the complete, authentic text of Marivaux's novel, including the ending contrived by Mme Riccoboni. Until now modern editors have been reproducing the text of the 1825 edition, with some twelve hundred arbitrary modifications from Duviquet's hand! The latter, not content with modernizing Marivaux's vocabulary, had cut periodic sentences into series of short phrases. Deloffre, on the contrary, retains even the original punctuation whenever it can be reasonably attributed to Marivaux himself—thus setting an example which could be followed in the editing of many eighteenth century texts (cf. J. Mourot on Diderot's punctuation, *Le Français Moderne*, XX [1952], 287–94). Similarly restored are many words which Marivaux seems to have used in forms already archaic in an eighteenth century linguistic context—and therefore stylistically significant.

The extensive introduction is an original contribution in itself. It places *Marianne* in relation to the *genre romanesque ou galant*; Marivaux's most romantic novel, *Effets surprenants de la sympathie*, is, by the way, a first sketch of *Marianne's* plot; indeed, the development of themes first appearing in youthful works is characteristic of Marivaux (see *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis*, II, 59–66). Deloffre, tracing the genesis of *Marianne*, does not merely list the sources or more remote literary models for this or that episode: he follows the steps of composition by first posing the problems presented by the laws of the genre and the internal necessities of the situation, and then he studies the solutions found by Marivaux (e.g. pp. xix, xxv, xxxi, xxxiv, etc.). This criticism from the inside permits analysis without dissection deadly to the work of art; it deepens our knowledge of Marivaux's artistic resources by showing how he achieved his purpose despite the *servitudes techniques* of the genre. Follows an illuminating discussion of the role of chance and destiny in the novel, and a fine distinction between the dramatic and the pathetic. By chance (p. 1–liv), Deloffre is close to G. Poulet's *Distance intérieure* and Anna Meister's *Entwicklung Marivaux'*; he does not seem to know about Spitzer's discussion (*RR*, XLIV [1953], 102–26). Deloffre's point of view allows him to cast off long established misconceptions of the critics, from Sainte-Beuve to Faguet. Still more remarkable is his fresh approach to the stylistic *préciosité* in *Marianne*: he explains that it can be accounted for by Marivaux's views on the nature of mind, by the *état de langue* of the time, especially the lack of a vocabulary of psychological analysis (*sentimental, intuitif*, for example, do not yet exist), which forces Marivaux to use either neologisms or intricate sentences. This part of the introduction, too short, should be supplemented with Deloffre's outstanding dissertation on Marivaux's language and style (*Marivaux et le Marivaudage*, Paris, 1955); but the glossary will at least spare the student of style many mistakes by clarifying the meaning of the eighteenth-century

language, and the stylistic value of words which have undergone semantic changes. Their connotations are explained with respect to Marivaux's aims: *mouvement*, for instance, is shown to be a basic word in his psychological and realistic descriptions.

Deloffre does not cite W. Boctor's *Réalisme dans les romans de Marivaux*. I would also question the label *neologism* which sometimes seems to cover our present ignorance of earlier datings of words (see *RR*, XLIV [1953], 282-89), and it is possible to entertain the same doubts as to Marivaux's being an initiator of the *discours indirect libre* in the novel (p. 33, n. 1). Deloffre hesitates to recognize forms of affective style (pp. 286, 527, etc.): exclamations, accumulations, hyperboles in description should, however, be classed under this head. He might also have studied the literary use of clichés so frequent in *Marianne*, especially for understatement or social characterizations—some, however, perhaps unconscious. But these reservations do not detract from the general excellence of the book. (MICHAEL RIFFATERRE, Columbia University)

Honoré de Balzac. By Herbert J. Hunt. London: The Athlone Press, 1957. Pp. 198. Dr. Hunt's *Honoré de Balzac* is the first biography of the great novelist to be written in English in more than twenty-five years. This is not so surprising as it seems. Few writers offer such a problem to the biographer. What Balzac lived for, once he had found himself, was the creation of *La Comédie humaine*; it was his passionate struggle to describe the whole contemporary scene that gives his career its special density and drive. But the history of his books is not a biography; and one of the extraordinary things about him, considering the energy that went into the *Comédie*, is that he found time to be involved in such a tangle of other interests and activities. There are his business ventures which continued, with few intermissions, from his early manhood to his last illness, his work as a journalist, his various love affairs, his friendships and his quarrels, his political ambitions, to mention only some of the most important. It is this multiplicity that makes his life so hard to present as a whole and that, no doubt, has led so many distinguished scholars to concentrate on this or that aspect. Yet everything that Balzac did, whether commonplace or erratic, he did in a thoroughly characteristic manner. One of the virtues of Dr. Hunt's book is the success with which he has caught this elusive unity of tone beneath the confused pattern of details that tends to obscure it.

Dr. Hunt has avoided what seem to be the two greatest temptations of biographers. He has not felt compelled to put down everything he knows. His book is a distillation of a huge amount of material, scrupulously sifted and arranged with a fine sense of proportion. Witness the way he treats the series of Balzac's rather sordid and repetitious quarrels with the long list of his publishers. Everything of real importance is there, yet the stream of the narrative keeps flowing; and it is *one* current, not a collection of separate channels. On the other hand, Dr. Hunt has not played up his material. There are no "characteristic" remarks invented by the biographer, no dramatic reconstructions of scenes that could only have been observed by the participants. Dr. Hunt does not romanticize Balzac's love affairs, nor does he make moral judgments. Typical of his sane point of view is his summing up of Balzac's relations with Mme Hanska: "Indignation with Eve and sentimentality in her favor are equally pointless. Balzac was an exceptional man, and beyond her power to measure. It is not easy to imagine how the pattern of his life would

have developed had they never met; it is permissible to regret that they ever did meet."

This book contains no striking new discoveries. It is rather a clarification of all that is at present known about Balzac. Dr. Hunt's shrewd judgment, however, gives it a unique quality—a combination of sympathy and detachment, of sensitivity and (above all) common sense. He is never the dupe of his material. When he quotes from Balzac's letters, for example, he is careful to suggest *why* he wrote, at that particular time and to that particular correspondent, in the way he did. Too often commentators have been willing to accept these letters at their face value, to interpret them as Balzac must have hoped they would be read by their recipients.

The extreme conciseness of the book demands an attentive reading. Any one not well acquainted with Balzac may at first be bewildered by the quantity of names and titles cited by Dr. Hunt. But if this is a defect, it is an inevitable defect of the book's qualities. The writer has refused to smooth the way for his reader by specious simplifications. The sense of Balzac's character is created almost imperceptibly by a series of neat strokes, until in the last chapter, "The Essential Balzac," we are given a brilliant portrait which illuminates all that has gone before—a portrait of Balzac the man and Balzac the genius, "at once the dispenser of visions and the discoverer of his own age." (SAMUEL ROGERS, *University of Wisconsin*)

Hugo et la poésie pure. Par Alfred Glauser. Genève: Droz, 1957. Pp. 132. It is a well-known fact that, in the last quarter of a century, an effort has been made to re-appraise the poetry of Victor Hugo, one might almost say to re-habilitate it. But even though, in 1952, Claude Roy could write his "Notes sur la lecture des poètes nommés Hugo," (*Europe*, février-mars, 1952), Hugo remains for the majority the earlier Hugo and the author of half a dozen poems in *La Légende des siècles*. It is to this Hugo, no doubt, that even Gide was referring when he followed by an all too famous "alas" his statement that Hugo was the greatest French poet. There is no "alas" in Mr. Glauser's appraisal of Hugo as "le poète le plus pur de notre langue" (p. xi), but there is a voluntary ambiguity. The author deliberately (p. 131) recalls the Abbé Bremond and a formula which, in previous years, condemned almost all of Hugo's poetry. The "purity" with which Mr. Glauser is concerned is not merely, as he suggests, "broader" than that defined by Bremond, it is different in nature. Indeed, there seems to be a certain vagueness in Mr. Glauser's own interpretation of the term as he uses it: "Hugo [...] nous apparaît comme le poète le plus pur de notre langue, car il y a en lui une volonté avant tout de Poésie," he states in the opening sentence of his Introduction. In the conclusion we read: "le poète amateur de rêve était Français. La raison ne l'abandonnait pas, et c'est là que le miracle hugolien commence: dans la forme la plus ivre du monde est contenue la pensée solide d'une tête étonnamment intelligente. C'est par là qu'il mérite d'être appellé poète pur" (p. 131).

If we leave aside such definitions, it becomes clear, particularly with Chapter 7 entitled "Le poète pur devant son présent," that, among the poets named Hugo, Mr. Glauser has chosen to study the one whose verses—with the images they shape—spring out of the void, created by nothing except the word itself. This is the poet he rehabilitates and not the poet of the everyday world, the Victor Hugo of "le cercle de famille," nor the humanitarian "mage." His book is characteristic of a

trend which, best illustrated perhaps by Denis Saurat's *La Religion de Victor Hugo* (1929), stresses the later Hugo, the Hugo of "Ibo," *La Fin de Satan* and *Dieu*. Hugo's peculiar mysticism, his visionary power, his fantastic symbolism, have all, in the last years, received their share of attention. Though Mr. Glauser's approach is his own, he owes much to predecessors whom he does not mention.

Mr. Glauser's book has great qualities. First, an intimate knowledge of Hugo's monumental poetic work: quotation after quotation, none banal, fill the pages, accompanied by enthusiastic and illuminating commentaries. Secondly, a real grasp of the strange nature of the verbal processes inherent in Hugo's poetry. Moreover, Mr. Glauser does not attempt to rehabilitate all Hugo's poetry, well aware of its weaknesses. He does us the service of pointing out, without any pretense at being exhaustive, some of the ways by which we can approach the poet and enter into his world, rather than remain strangers outside it.

It is in great part the accumulation of excellent quotations which gives their originality to the first two chapters: "Hugo-Dieu" and "Le Poète-Satyre." In the five chapters that follow, Mr. Glauser is more concerned with the analysis of the creative processes by which, out of a void, Hugo conjures up his universe. "Genèse," "Chanson," "La Pente de la musique," and "Création par la forme" contain some really exciting examples and analyses of the genesis of certain descriptions and the emergence of some of the numberless mythical and titanesque Hugolian figures.

Something of Hugo's dynamic rhetoric has passed into Mr. Glauser's style which tends to be elliptical and affirmative. This is a disadvantage sometimes as the reader does not necessarily see the logic behind assertions which are made rather than proved. But it has a distinct advantage too. Hugo's world is so hyperbolical that when reading a critical analysis the reader finds it hard to bridge the gap between the assumptions Hugo makes and the rational perspectives within which the critic moves. The grandeur and turmoil of the poem are thus lost and its imaginative impact destroyed. This Mr. Glauser has successfully avoided though perhaps his enthusiasm has led him on occasion to an overeloquent and somewhat repetitious form of expression. (GERMAINE BRÉE, New York University)

The Legacy of Philarète Chasles. I: Selected Essays on Nineteenth-Century French Literature. Edited by A. Levin (University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, 17). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957. Pp. 248. This book is actually a florilegium of articles written by Philarète Chasles on the great writers of his day. It includes twenty-six articles, the bulk of them from the *Journal des Débats*, arranged in sections each of which deals with a specific writer. Eight of them concern Balzac, five Chateaubriand, and three Sainte-Beuve. The work is actually derivative of Professor Levin's 1953 Harvard dissertation: *Philarète Chasles as a Critic of French Literature of the Nineteenth Century*.

Mr. Levin has set out to rehabilitate Chasles, who was once considered the equal of Sainte-Beuve, but is now all but forgotten. Without question, Chasles was an important figure in his age. He held the first chair of comparative literature at the Collège de France, earned an enviable reputation as a first-rank critic and free-lance writer. He is credited with the honor of having done as much, if not more, than any of his contemporaries in introducing France to the literatures of England, Germany, America, Russia, and Scandinavia.

However, so far has Chasles dropped into literary oblivion that there had been only one study of his work made prior to Mr. Levin's dissertation. In 1933 Miss Eva Margaret Phillips of University College, Aberystwyth, Wales, undertook to explain his role as a historian of English literature. No one else has bothered with him, partly, perhaps, because his writing is scattered through a great many periodicals, many of them presently inaccessible. Here, then, for the first time are found what Mr. Levin believes to be the best of Chasles' essays on French literature. And so confident is he that the book fills a gap in our knowledge, that he proposes to follow this volume with two others, one a collection of essays on Anglo-American literature, the other on Spanish and Italian literature.

It is of interest to have readily available samples of Chasles' work, particularly the introduction he wrote for the second edition of Balzac's *Contes philosophiques*. So little is known about him that Mr. Levin feels obliged to prefix his biography to this volume. And some of the essays, all but five, are actually reproduced here for the first time since they were originally issued.

In regard to a work of this type, one can take issue with the editor on only two points: the selection and the value of publishing the collection. In regard to the first, one can only commend Mr. Levin for his choice. These essays are as good as any Chasles wrote during his long career. However, one may question the validity of granting three full volumes to his work. Certainly they add to our knowledge of Chasles, but they do not increase very greatly our knowledge of the authors treated. From the standpoint of the literary historian, this volume will serve as a source of references; it will make available samples of Chasles' work for those interested in the history of criticism. It will not, it is to be feared, raise Chasles much higher in the hierarchy of French critics nor combat the accusations which the Symbolists hurled at him. Despite Mr. Levin's enthusiasm and competent handling of the material, Chasles' work seems dated; it has certainly not maintained the freshness that can still be found in Sainte-Beuve's work. (ALBERT J. GEORGE, *Syracuse University*)

J.-K. Huysmans, *Lettres inédites à Camille Lemonnier*. Publiées et annotées par Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen. Genève: Librairie Droz, Paris: Librairie Minard, 1957. Pp. ix + 148. Uniform in format and presentation with two volumes of Huysmans letters published by Pierre Lambert (*Lettres à Emile Zola*, 1953; *Lettres à Edmond de Goncourt*, 1956), the present collection maintains both the high editorial quality as well as the intrinsic interest of the material previously offered. What distinguishes this collection from the previous two is its tone. Goncourt and Zola were regarded by Huysmans as his "patrons"; even after his emancipation from their personal and ideological influences, he continued to treat them to the end with polite respect. Whereas his letters to Camille Lemonnier are not only completely uninhibited by such sentiments, but reflect the genuinely affectionate friendship-on-an-equal-basis which characterized their relations from the start. These are consequently familiar, chatty epistles, sparkling with the brilliantly colorful language Huysmans could wield.

The first letter is dated October 1876, a few weeks after their initial meeting in Brussels where Huysmans had gone to supervise the printing of his first novel, *Marthe*. Both were interested not only in fiction but as fully in the graphic arts

(Lemonnier's first work, *Salon de Bruxelles*, had appeared a dozen years earlier). Added to those major factors was the Belgian's curiosity in everything that was going on in Paris.

Huysmans was an admirable correspondent until 1884. He supplied his friend with juicy tidbits on the capital's artists, writers, publishers. He discussed his own work-in-progress as well as Lemonnier's published work as inscribed copies reached him. He went out of his way to establish fruitful contacts for Lemonnier within his circle of friends, just as he urged his correspondent to publicize his own production in Belgium. And he gave vent regularly to his increasing disenchantment, frequently at the way "American taste" was taking root in France.

From 1884 on, the correspondence dwindles practically to nothing. With the appearance of *A rebours* that year, the demands on Huysmans' time were to be prodigious, both from his own literary activity and from the inevitable and varied pressures that are the lot of a celebrity. Furthermore, he continued serving as a *fonsctionnaire* for a number of years. The last letter is of 1893, with no indication by the editor as to whether the relationship continued beyond that date (Huysmans died in 1907, Lemonnier in 1913).

This volume is a welcome addition to the body of Huysmans letters. Others are to be expected, each revealing a new facet of his complex personality, one of the most interesting of the century. Why have we had to wait so long for Huysmans' correspondence? Simply because his literary executor, Lucien Descaves, rigidly enforced his friend's desire to keep letters and personal documents unpublished. It is only since the death of Descaves in 1949 that the wealth of material in libraries and private collections could be offered to the public. This volume, prepared by an outstanding historian of Franco-Belgian literary relations, serves the Huysmans cause admirably. (ARTINE ARTINIAN, Bard College)

Zur Wortgeographie der italienischen Umgangssprache. Von Robert Ruegg (Kölner Romanistische Arbeiten, Neue Folge, 7). Köln, 1956. Pp. 190. A great number of linguistic geographic studies have been devoted to the dialects of the various European languages. For some, such as Italian and French, we possess fairly detailed linguistic atlases; but comparatively little work has been done in the exploration of the geographic differences of the *Umgangssprache*, the medium of communication of the educated, or at least better educated, that is neither completely identical with the official standard literary language nor with the dialect or *patois* of the lower strata of the population. Dr. Ruegg's work, originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation, is devoted to the exploration of this middle stratum of language which is bordered by the literary tongue and by the *patois*. One of the difficult problems he has to face is to establish the distinction between dialect, *Umgangssprache*, and the literary language. The problem is not, and probably cannot be, solved with any degree of precision since the boundaries do not correspond to social stratification but to levels of speech used by the same individual. Where *patois* ends and *Umgangssprache* begins must remain a matter of personal interpretation—especially in those areas in which the differences between the standard language and the dialect are not obviously marked by outstanding phonological and morphological differences. A speaker of Tuscan will have much greater difficulty determining whether he is using *Umgangssprache* or *patois* than a speaker of Sardinian whose *patois* is quite drastically different from Standard Italian.

The sources used by Ruegg include linguistic works (dictionaries, synonym lists), contemporary movies and authors (both primarily of the neo-realistic type), newspapers, and above all a rather elaborate questionnaire (including information on the purpose of his study, an attempt to define *Umgangssprache*, and containing some three hundred questions concerning the personal background of the informants, and inquiring into the expressions used for some 240 different concepts).

Over a third of the book deals with the problems encountered in formulating and using the questionnaire. Dr. Ruegg started with a sample inquiry in German in Switzerland, and followed it up with another sample in Italy. Only after determining what seemed the most useful areas of inquiry and the most promising concepts, did he send out his general questionnaires to various parts of Italy. Whenever possible he tried to supplement the written inquiry by personal interviews with informants from different areas. All in all, he received answers from some 124 informants distributed over 54 provinces of Italy, the north Italian provinces and Tuscany being much more heavily represented than the south. The basic method used in the questionnaire is to give the informant a choice between a series of synonyms. He is to choose the one he uses most frequently in his daily speech, and to decide which of the synonyms sound antiquated, literary, familiar, dialectal, etc. In addition, he may also add comments, add an expression used in his speech and absent from the choice submitted by the author. Ruegg thus abandons the usually accepted principle of linguistic inquiry—maximum spontaneity on the part of the informant. Instead of describing the concept or eliciting a response by asking a question, he makes the informant the judge of whether or not an expression belongs to his *Umgangssprache*. And while Dr. Ruegg is quite successful in making a case against the supposed "spontaneity" achieved by other methods of inquiry, he cannot make a very good case for his own method. He is, so to speak, at the mercy of his informants. Fortunately, he is at least aware of the various psychological reactions which may influence an informant's response (hyperregionalism, desire to seem literary, prescriptive attitudes, desire to present one's self as belonging to the urban rather than the rural community, etc.). Ruegg is also extremely conscious of the other sources of inaccuracy inherent in his method. Since not all of his informants come from the same type of community, the responses may vary according to sociological factors rather than regional differences. In the same way, differences in educational background, age, etc. may distort the picture.

Dr. Ruegg summarizes the results of his inquiry by recording the frequency of the choices made in various regions. The terms are grouped according to semantic categories (1. family, 2. children and games, 3. body and health, 4. food, 5. clothing, etc.). Then the author singles out ten concepts (1. zucca, 2. servicio de tavola, 3. appartamento, 4. ieri l'altro, 5. doman l'altro, 6. battere qn., 7. giocare a rimpiazzino, 8. marinare la scuola, 9. autista, 10. autorimessa) and describes in detail the various expressions used, compares the usages of the *Umgangssprache* with those of the literary language and those of the *patois*, and tries to give an historical account of the growth and distribution of certain expressions—an undertaking which seems difficult since practically all the historical sources reflect literary language and not *Umgangssprache*. Nevertheless, Dr. Ruegg's discussion shows here a great deal of skill and awareness of the multiplicity of factors, such as foreign influences, former political boundaries, etc., which have influenced the distribution of expressions throughout Italy.

In conclusion, Dr. Ruegg has shown a great deal of awareness of a complex methodological problem, without having been able to solve it—partly because he had to rely on written inquiry rather than on-the-spot investigation. We also miss in his discussion of the methodology almost all reference to the rather considerable literature on the problem of linguistic inquiries (Sever Pop, Hans Kurath, Navarro Tomás, etc.). While most of this literature deals with dialect geography rather than *Umgangssprache*, the methodological problems discussed are similar to those encountered by Ruegg.

As Dr. Ruegg himself points out, the type of inquiry he has undertaken could serve several purposes: (1) it could be primarily concerned with the perennial *Questione della lingua* and the degree of Tuscanism in standard Italian; (2) it could emphasize comparison of the *Umgangssprache* with dialects—though this type of comparison is made difficult by the fact that most dialectal studies and the Italian Linguistic Atlas are oriented toward rural speech and rural vocabulary while Ruegg's study concerns itself with urban speech and urban rather than rural semantic categories; (3) another possible concern could be pedagogical: which words are really most commonly used in colloquial Italian and should be taught to the foreign student? Any one of these purposes would have demanded a different choice of concepts to be studied. Since Ruegg could not make up his mind which the main purpose of his study should be, it does not really fulfill any of them. The general impression one gets from his book is that he entered into a vast field of research which quickly grew far beyond the scope of the dissertation for which it was intended. Thus Ruegg concludes his book with a list of purposes or points of view according to which an inquiry such as his could be undertaken and materials such as his might be sifted. Much of his advice could be applied to his own materials; but Ruegg has the excuse that he is pioneering in a field in which he has had comparatively few predecessors. Further, more detailed and more carefully organized work in the general area of research of Ruegg's book seems highly desirable. (ROBERT L. POLITZER, University of Michigan)

Quelques Antécédents de "A la recherche du temps perdu": Tendances qui peuvent avoir contribué à la cristallisation du roman proustien. Par Elisabeth Czoniczer. Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1957. Pp. 224. At the outset and several times thereafter Mrs. Czoniczer points out that her study does not claim to establish immediate sources but rather, as indeed her title already shows, "antecedents," "tendencies which may have contributed to the crystallization of Proust's novel." Proust was not, as has been stated, "an isolated phenomenon, having nothing in common with his times," but a writer who was formed by and grew out of a specific intellectual climate. He did indeed isolate himself during the writing of his novel, but his ideas were then already formed by earlier readings and contacts. The total period covered by the study corresponds to the interval between the Franco-Prussian and First World Wars, but particular attention is paid to the closing twenty years of the nineteenth century, for it is then that his bent was established.

After two preliminary chapters dealing respectively with the literary situation at the beginning of this period and with the new interest in psychology and its relation to literature, Mrs. Czoniczer proceeds to the main part of her task: the citing of antecedents for the most characteristic Proustian themes. Their relation to Freudian ideas is dealt with in a "parenthesis" (since the author rightly considers these

points of contact as of minor importance) and she shows that it is not impossible, as has been claimed, that Proust knew anything of Freud. His father was a professor of hygiene but by no means immured in his specialty, for he made contributions to the study of neurasthenia and hysteria. His younger brother was preparing to study medicine; the Daudets, with whom Proust was on a friendly footing, were close friends of Charcot, under whom Freud studied; articles by and about Freud began to appear in French medical and psychological journals in 1893. All in all it is more likely than not that Proust should have read something of the new theories or at least have heard them talked about.

Psychologists, philosophers, and men of letters offer antecedents to the Proustian themes of the nature of personal identity, the multiplicity of the self, the subjectivity of love, the abyss between reality and appearance, the living continuance of the past, and memory. The authors cited are not confined to the nineteenth century but range backward in time to Montaigne, St. Augustine, and Plato, for such earlier writers were a part of the climate of Proust's period. Authors whose relationship to Proust has already been extensively studied are subordinated to others hitherto less noticed; Bergson, for example, is largely displaced by Frédéric Paulhan. Among men of letters André Theuriet appears as something of a novelty, and it is about him that Mrs. Czoniczer makes her closest approach to a claim for direct filiation of ideas.

In dealing with Proustian memory Mrs. Czoniczer follows the usual custom of dividing it into voluntary and involuntary, whereas Proust's introductory pages clearly show a tripartite classification: abstract voluntary memory (the memory of the intellect), affective voluntary memory (rich recall of incidents associated with a past emotion, e.g. the child's horror of going to bed) and involuntary memory, which is also affective. The threefold division is implicit in some of the passages cited by Mrs. Czoniczer, but is not clarified.

The net effect of these researches is not to show us where Proust found his ideas but to make us feel that there is nothing new under the sun—except a new combination of the old. Gone are the days when the literary scholar, playing scientist, tried to demonstrate a transmission of ideas as mechanical as that of motion in a carom shot. Perhaps it is the scientist himself who has changed, and the literary scholar is still following his lead. Of the change in scientific outlook the late Hans Reichenbach wrote, "Gone is the ideal of the scientist who knows absolute truth. The happenings of nature are like rolling dice rather than like revolving stars" (*The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*, p. 248). Not all scientific philosophers would repudiate causality so sweepingly, but all would agree that it is a much more complex concatenation than the nineteenth century suspected.

Mrs. Czoniczer recognizes (p. 12) that written sources or antecedents are not the only ones, nor even perhaps the most numerous, but they are the ones which can be traced. Since she leaves it to our imagination to specify the others I would suggest that the most important among them is personal experience and that the "originality" of Proust is not so much an ingenious combination of ingredients culled from books or distilled from the atmosphere as it is the discovery in his own experience of a clue which illuminated the recorded experience of others. I see no reason to doubt the impression conveyed by the novel and confirmed by certain of the letters that involuntary memory was for him such an experience and such a clue. Proust did not learn involuntary memory from Chateaubriand or Nerval or Baudelaire,

but from experience; afterwards he noted that these others had had a similar adventure. His literary culture leaps to the eye from every page of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, but it is vitalized and organized by experience.

To say that Mrs. Czoncizer's book tells us little about Proust is not to dispraise it, but merely to class it as an essay in the history of ideas rather than in literary history or criticism. In the preface to his *Eminent Victorians* Lytton Strachey recommended that the explorer of the past row out over the ocean of his materials and let down a little bucket for a sample. It is something like this that Mrs. Czoncizer has done, but she does not draw up a random sample; her bucket is selective and brings up only what is relevant to Proust. It is a good method and the result is of great interest to all who value the delicate art of assessing the climate of a bygone age. (HAROLD MARCH. Swarthmore College)

Les Deux Zola: Science et personnalité dans l'expression. Par J. H. Matthews. Genève: Droz, 1957. Pp. 100. It is now almost a cliché to say that Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* is a mixture of the objective and the subjective, the scientific and the personal. If we look closely at *Germinal*, for example, we discover that it is both a heavily documented novel and an artistic novel. The combination of documentation and artistry (including a personal point of view) is one of the book's fascinations. What is true of *Germinal* is also true of most, if not all, of the *Rougon-Macquart*. Mr. Matthews attempts, not to prove this accepted notion which deals primarily with the structure and general composition of the novels, but rather to extend it to the matter of linguistic expression. When Zola merely describes in essentially ordinary terms the mining area in *Germinal*, he is using naturalistic language justified by the theory of the naturalistic novel, but when he writes that "le Voreux, au fond de son trou, avec son tassemment de bête méchante, s'écrasait davantage, respirait d'une haleine plus grosse et plus longue, l'air gêné par sa digestion pénible de chair humaine," is he not allowing his own personality to intervene and to dictate a choice of words that are interpretive (some would say "propagandistic") rather than merely descriptive?

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In several chapters Mr. Matthews adduces further evidence to prove that Zola's temperament affected his linguistic expression. Take the matter of smell. The odors of *L'Assommoir* are largely expressed in naturalistic terms, as are many of *Le*

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Ventre de Paris which Zola recalled from his personal observation. But when in *Au bonheur des dames* we read that the gloves offered for sale have an "odeur de fauve comme sucrée de musc," "où il y a de la bête en folie, tombée dans la boîte à poudre de riz d'une fille," it indeed seems likely that Zola's own sensitivity and imagination are at the bottom of this characterization and account for the language chosen. Sight, sound, and touch in the *Rougon-Macquart* also suggest that objective observation and experience do not alone always explain the text. This is particularly true in certain cases of synesthesia culled by Mr. Matthews from *La Curée*, *Le Ventre de Paris*, *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, and *Au bonheur des dames*.

Occasionally Mr. Matthews gets away from his announced subject. When he points out that Zola intended *L'Argent* to be "la peinture de la société en décadence" with "tous les personnages [...] choisis pour cela," he is in the realm of structure and general composition rather than expression. But on the whole his book contains a valuable analysis of an aspect of Zola's work insufficiently treated till now.
(ELLIOTT M. GRANT, Williams College)

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